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1907

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# THE SMART SET

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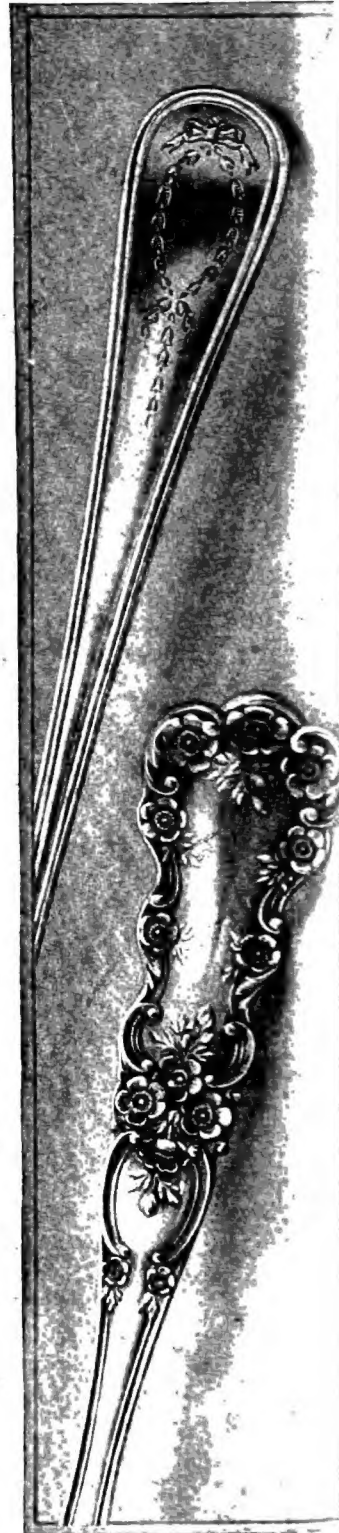
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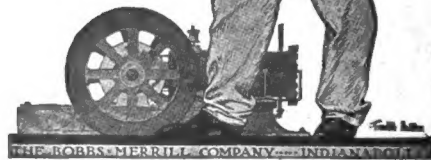
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A MAGAZINE OF  
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Vol. XXIII

NOVEMBER, 1907

No. 3

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# KNEE DEEP IN JUNE

By Eleanor Hoyt Brainerd

## I

“MISS HOLLAND!”

The young woman who sat in a big wicker chair, looking out through the open window into a drift of pink and white apple-blossom, paid no attention to the call. Maria had a passion for shrieking exclamatory nothings from far corners of the house, but one must make allowances for a maid who is willing to spend a Summer on a farm five miles from a railway station and quite out of reach of other servants who might supply society for her.

“Miss Holland!”

The voice came from the foot of the stairs this time.

“Miss Holland!”

Maria now stood in the doorway, her sunset hair straggling in incorrigible wisps about her excited face.

“If you please, ma’am, there’s a man in the brook.”

For a moment the mistress was alarmed. Then a recollection that the brook was but two feet deep in its most impressive pool brought reassurance.

“What’s he doing in the brook?” she asked with languid interest.

“Fishing, ma’am.”

Miss Holland sat up.

“Well, really! Maria, go tell him this is private property—or send John.”

“John’s up in the wood lot, ma’am.”

“Then go yourself.”

“Yes, ma’am.”

She disappeared, and Miss Holland returned to sybaritic contemplation of the apple-blossoms.

Five minutes later Maria once more intruded—more disheveled and more excited than before.

“If you please, ma’am, he says he has a right to fish in the brook. He says he’s always done it and it ain’t posted, and there’s something in big words about fishing laws, and he’s going right on, ma’am.”

Janet Holland stared incredulously at the messenger.

“He wouldn’t go?”

“No, ma’am.”

“Well, of all the impertinence! And Billy coming with some of his friends next week, just for the fishing! The creature won’t leave a trout and then everybody will make more fun of my farm than ever. I’ll go and talk to the man myself.”

She rose and went down the stairs and out beneath the blossom-laden trees which rained soft petals upon her brown hair in mockery of her stern dignity.

Down through the garden she went, between the borders of nodding daffodils and narcissi that heralded the coming wealth of Summer sweetness, and at the farther end of the path she paused between the clumps of heavy scented lilac to look toward the brook that babbled wood secrets to the cowslips nodding along its meadow banks.

No creature was in sight save a gentle-eyed cow of meditative aspect, apparently chewing Spring poetry along with her cud.

“He must have gone on up the ravine,” murmured the lady of the manor, turning her steps toward the fringe of the woodland from which the garrulous brook tumbled its way into

the sunlit meadow. Only by constantly reminding herself of her errand could she keep her indignation at fever heat as she went along. It is hard to be consistently wroth when one is out of doors in the Maytime, and even in gloomy weather Janet was not an awesome young person.

She moved lingeringly, stopping to listen to a bird song, to look at the far blue hills, to pick a wildflower from the lush meadow grass; and she had almost forgotten her errand when she reached the shade of the woods. The whirr of a reel called her back to her grievance.

She must assert herself. These native farmer folk thought that because she was a lone young woman from the city who chose to play at farming she could be imposed upon, overridden, bullied. Already she had been cheated in a host of ways, had paid more than the fair price for everything from seed potatoes to labor, and the farmer who had answered her advertisement and proposed to relieve her of all care and responsibility for the beggarly consideration of thirty-five dollars a month and board for himself and wife, had proved but a broken reed. Yes, she really must assert herself and prove that, though ignorant about sowing and reaping, she was tenacious of her rights.

The vivid green moss was soft under her feet, the birds sang over her head among the half-awake leaves of the forest trees—so far behind the orchards in donning their Summer livery—but Janet hardened her heart and composed a polite but scathing address for the ears of the farmer lad whose line was whizzing through the air down among the trout-pools.

Pushing aside the bushes, she reached the bank of the ravine and looked down through the shadows, warmed to golden green where the sunlight sifted through the leaves. Frowning, she followed with her eyes the course of the brook; and as her gaze reached the brown pool below the great boulder she gave an involuntary gasp of surprise. There was the trespasser, but

her farmer boy was clad in fishing garb of a fashion distinctly urban, though battered and worn by service. Every line of the sturdy back turned toward her disowned rural associations. It is never among the country dwellers, of whose simple life and blessed manual labor the poets and philosophers sing, that one finds a man erect, sinewy, muscular, well set-up, moving with the sure grace of a well-trained body. Yes; the poacher undoubtedly had an athletic-club back as well as city clothes. Even the line of his smooth-shaven chin, of which a half-glimpse was visible, and the superiority of his haircut, were urban.

The carefully prepared address hung fire, seemed inadequate, and it was difficult to compose a substitute upon the spur of the moment. Still, a city fisherman would presumably be even more disastrous to trout than a native; and Billy was coming, and, after all, it was her brook. A twig snapped under her foot and the intruder looked up.

The tip of his rod dropped into the water and his fingers fumbled futilely with the reel.

Was she spirit of wood or of brook, and did the naiads and dryads all wear linen shirt-waists and short serge skirts in this modern day, and what was the proper form of address for a divinity?

Townsend's mind fumbled as futilely as his fingers and brought forth an eloquent:

"Good morning."

Miss Holland relinquished her feeble hold upon her prepared harangue and achieved an echo:

"Good morning."

Even had Townsend been primed with conversation her icy tone would have frozen inspiration at its source, and dialogue languished while the brook chuckled sardonically among the mossy rocks and the gnarled tree-roots.

"You are probably not aware that you are trespassing upon private property."

Miss Holland had found her voice

and her tone was coldly skeptical. It implied that he was entirely conscious of his misdoings, that he was trespassing deliberately, wilfully, that he had been caught, figuratively speaking, red-handed, and that justice, not mercy, was to be his portion. The hasty verdict stung him to resentment and protest.

"I'm sorry if I am an unwelcome intruder," he said, with a mingling of his best legal and social manners, "but I'm not actually trespassing. You see, I am in the brook and——"

"The brook is upon my property."

"Certainly, but it is not posted, and the law in this State provides that——"

"I don't care anything about the silly old laws," announced the young woman with sweeping finality.

Townsend gasped at the anarchistic assertion.

"But, madam, I'm very positive about the matter. I'm a lawyer myself."

"You have my sympathy, sir."

The little chin was high in the air, the brown eyes were flashing angrily and the mere man was helpless before feminine unreason. When judge and jury announce boldly that they attach not the slightest importance to the majesty of the law how can an attorney plead his case?

The angler waded to the opposite bank of the brook and faced the irate young woman across the little stream whose mirth now sounded almost hysterical. Even the squirrels were chattering amused comment upon the farce.

"I am quite within my rights, madam, but as a matter of courtesy to a woman I will, of course, leave the premises at once."

And then into the midst of his offended dignity and irritation shot an illuminating gleam of humor, and he did the unpardonable thing. He smiled straight into the haughty face across the brook—smiled a tolerant, condoning, whimsical smile—a smile of masculine superiority. "Pretty women are not to be taken seriously, God bless them," said the smile, and with

an amiable bow the smiler turned, swung himself up the bank and disappeared, leaving behind him a triumphant enemy whose triumph tasted uncommonly like Dead Sea fruit.

"Beast!" said Miss Holland inellegantly. Comradeship with her brother Billy had modified to some extent the traditional femininity of her speech, and this was an occasion for forceful language. For a man to have law and good manners both upon his side was intolerable. If he had lost his temper she could have forgiven him—but to find her amusing!

"Well, at any rate he has gone," she remarked to an interested chipmunk; and then she smiled herself—but it was a rueful little smile. Only a very robust sense of humor can triumph over a consciousness of having been made to appear exceeding small.

"He really had a nice back," she confided to the chipmunk, "but he was a beast!"

## II

AND, after all, Billy did not come. The trout roved unmolested in the brook and Janet grew a trifle blasé in the matter of rural scenery and bird song. Maria's society was not stimulating and John and his wife had, partly through ignorance, partly through laziness and maliciousness, strained their employer's forbearance almost to the breaking point. Farm life, in spite of the weather clerk's best efforts, was not proving all that Miss Holland's hopes and poetic fancy had pictured it. The farm was all right; but Mirabella, the spotted calf, furnished the only social element really worth considering, and Mirabella's owner was lonely.

When the man to whom she had spoken about posting the brook called to ask when he should put up the signs the fair farmer shook her head.

"I don't believe it's worth while, Mr. Thompson," she said; and after he went away she remarked to Mirabella across the pasture bars that if she put

up a sign at all, it would have on it a hand pointing toward the house and the inscription:

"Good angling here."

"He did have a nice back," she added reminiscently and with a faint regret in her voice.

One evening in June evidence of serious dishonesty and unreliability upon the part of John the farmer and his worse-tempered half fell by chance into their employer's hands and was the proverbial last straw. Miss Holland sent a note to her brother in the city asking him to advertise for another farmer for her, and lay awake most of the night trying to screw up courage to give the present incumbents warning. In the morning she decided to wait until after breakfast, and after breakfast she temporized by waiting until after luncheon.

Then at last she told the couple that she thought it would be better for them to depart when their month was up, and the scene precipitated by the announcement was worse than her most dramatic imaginings had foretold. John was comparatively civil, but John's wife displayed a temper and vocabulary beside which Xantippe's little efforts would have seemed a profound Buddhist calm. Having touched off the mine, Miss Holland, albeit surprised and inwardly quaking at the explosion, maintained a dignified and judicial front, and when the simple country folk announced, with a running accompaniment of opinion concerning her character, antecedents and ultimate destination, that, instead of waiting until the month end, they would leave that very afternoon, she assured them that the plan had her blessing and she herself drove them to the station.

When she came back to the farm Maria, an image of despairing gloom, met her at the gateway.

"It was that lonesome in the house that I couldn't stay in it," she explained dolefully. "Whatever are we goin' to do, ma'am?"

"I wired my brother. He'll get some sort of a man and be up here with him tomorrow."

"Yes'm, but what about tonight? We can't milk, neither of us, and the stock's got to be fed; and I won't stay in that house overnight without any man in it—not for nobody, ma'am."

"Nonsense," said Miss Holland crisply, but she looked tired and limp and there was a pathetic little tremolo back of the assurance in her voice. The day's experience had been decidedly trying.

"Whatever folks want to go off and live in the country for!" wailed Maria, large tears splashing down her broad and ruddy cheeks.

"Don't be an idiot, Maria. Put on your hat and go over to the Franklins'. I'd drive over, but Dandy is a little bit lame. Tell Mr. Franklin what has happened and ask him if he will come over to do the chores or send Jimmy."

The maid departed, cheered by the thought of telling the day's tragic tale to the nearest neighbors, and Miss Holland sat down upon the doorstep and waited for what seemed an unconscionable time. To be sure the Franklins lived a mile away and Maria would be more than human if she did not tell her story with elaborate detail; but an hour is a long time when one is only twenty-one and is very much alone in an exceedingly indifferent world.

At last, however, about five o'clock Maria reappeared, cheered and refreshed.

"They was horrified, ma'am—just horrified. Mrs. Franklin says you'd better count your spoons and go through your kitchen things right away. When I told them the things that woman said to you they said it was a mercy she didn't do you some bodily harm, ma'am. And Mr. Franklin and Jimmy, they've both gone to Bostwick for a vendoo and they won't be home till late, so Miss Franklin and Ida they was intending to do their own chores, and they said the boarder that's staying with them would come over and help you out. Mrs. Franklin said she knew he'd be glad to do it and he's real handy. He's been helping Mr. Franklin around the place and learning how to do everything, just because he likes it and it's



good for his health. He was real peaked when he came up, but he's picked up something wonderful. Mrs. Franklin says he's awful good-natured. He won't let her lift or carry nothing heavy when he's around, and he don't make a bit of trouble for nobody. Ida, she's perfectly gone on him, but she's forty-five if she's a day, so there ain't nothing in that. He most generally comes in about six o'clock and they'll send him right over. Then Jimmy, he'll come over when he gets home and stay all night. They said they'd never heard such langwidge as that woman used to you, ma'am, and——"

"Yes, yes, Maria. I'm much obliged to you. That's all very well arranged. I think I'll lie down for a little while now. You can get something for supper and show the man about things when he comes. Ask him to see what's wrong with Dandy's leg."

"Yes'm. You do look beat."

Janet climbed the stairs to her room, lay down on the chintz-covered couch, and cried miserably into the gaily flowered pillows. Billy had told her the farm idea was silly. So had everyone else, but Maria was so honest and faithful, and the farmer and his wife had such splendid references, and there would be visitors all through the Summer, and it was such a duck of a farm. She had always wanted a farm of her very own with a brook and a hayloft and tiny fluffy yellow chickens and squeally little bits of pigs and a calf on it. If she had had a father and mother they wouldn't have allowed her to do such a ridiculous thing. Suddenly she felt so desperately sorry for herself, because she was an orphan, that she cried some more; and then, being but twenty-one and very tired, she went fast asleep and slept until a thrush under her window wakened her to find the sunset gold and crimson glowing beneath the tree-tops.

Oddly enough, her orphaned estate had ceased to be a present woe. Having endured the condition since the tender age of two, she ought, so she reflected, to be somewhat accustomed to it. As for farms and farmers—well,

Billy would come in the morning and one recreant farmer didn't constitute an agricultural fizzle. Strange what a difference an hour's sleep can make in one's attitude toward life and its problems!

A bath and a fresh linen frock provided further spiritual encouragement, and the amateur farmer went down the stairs in a mood which achieved philosophy and approximated light-heartedness. In the kitchen Maria was singing as gaily as though satisfactory farmers might be picked from every bush. Evidently she, too, had cheered up.

Janet stood for a moment looking down the valley to where the great couchant hills crowded in purpling masses against a crimson sky. Such a glorious world, even when there was no one except a casual boarder to milk the cows! But she must really look after that boarder and see whether he seemed intelligent enough to straighten things out for the night.

She walked slowly along the path to the barn and in through the wide-open doors. A sound of munching from the mangers told her that the horses had been fed and she stopped to exchange friendly greetings with old Ben, the prop and mainstay of the farm work.

"No hard work for you today, old fellow," she said, friendly wise. "It's an ill wind that blows nobody good."

From the cow barn behind the stables came the strains of "Experience" melodiously whistled and fitted to an accompaniment of milk, squirted with metronomic precision into the pail. Janet smiled. The boarder evidently had a musical ear. It was to be hoped the cows were equally blessed. Suddenly the melody ended in a long-drawn note. There was a sound of someone moving about beyond the thin board partition and talking in low, persuasive tones, occasionally seconding the verbal persuasion by a resounding whack upon the flank of some stubborn cow.

A door was closed and fastened with its heavy wooden bar, steps came across the courtyard, the joyous whistle took up "Experience" where it had left the air. Janet moved toward the

open back-door of the main barn where the sunset view in all its flaming radiance was framed in heavy, worm-eaten timbers, but before she reached the door a tall, broad-shouldered figure carrying a pail of milk in each hand was silhouetted against the sky. The man's face was in shadow, but there was something oddly familiar about the general outline, and the girl stopped abruptly, narrowing her brows to see more clearly the face darkling against the background of red and gold. As she looked, suddenly she started backward, with a motion as toward hasty flight, but the man's eyes, dimmed at first by coming out of the colorful world into the shadows, had grown used to the half light and had seen her standing there before him with a color that might have been a reflection from the sunset in her cheeks and with incredulity and embarrassment warring in her eyes.

Once more his whistling died a violent death, but there was no sign of embarrassment in his face or manner. The surprise was hers. For him it had been a foregone conclusion that sooner or later he would encounter the fair farmer whose "chores" he was conscientiously doing, and so he was prepared. He was in his shirt-sleeves, and a frayed cap clung perilously to the back of his head. Straw stuck fast to his knickers and heavy woolen stockings. His shoes even in the wan twilight were shocking, but self-consciousness and he were apparently strangers. There was a smile in his eyes and on his lips as he stood facing the lady of the manor, a laugh in his voice as he said:

"It really isn't kleptomania, you know. I assure you it's all quite regular this time. I'm doing the chores in Franklin's place and I've every intention of handing the milk over to the young lady in the kitchen."

The quizzical tone and the covert allusion to the fishing episode deepened the color in the girl's cheeks from a blush of embarrassment to one of anger.

To be put under obligation to this man of all men—after having ordered him off her premises for fishing in the

brook! It was dreadful, intolerable. She would rather have allowed the cows and horses to die. And he was amused. He had been willing to do the work just for the sake of putting her further in the wrong and gloating over her discomfort. Beast! Beast!! Beast!!!

"I am extremely sorry you should have been forced into coming to our assistance," she said with a fine, frosty dignity. "If I had known that Mr. Franklin and Jimmy were unavailable I would have sent for some more distant neighbor. It was very kind of you, however, to do the work. I will settle for the accommodation with Mr. Franklin and you and he can adjust the matter to your own satisfaction. I am greatly obliged to you and to Mrs. Franklin for arranging the thing so nicely for me."

Her face was not the only one that was flushed now, but the man's lips still smiled quizzically. He had set the milk-pails on the barn floor and removed his cap. Now he thrust the cap into a pocket and once more took up his foaming burden.

"Oh, don't mention any obligation," he said easily, and with serene disregard of the hostility in her tone and words. "It has been a pleasure to take Franklin's place and prove that I have profited by his lessons in farm work. That's an uncommonly fine cow of yours—the red one. She gives more than any two of the others, but they are all thin. I'd advise a warm mash twice a day. You'll find the results more than offset the bother and expense. Good night. Jimmy will be over later."

He went along the path toward the kitchen, whistling again in a clear, cool, flute-like way, and Janet stood looking after him, her whole being given over to impotent wrath.

The creature wouldn't be crushed! He didn't care in the least how much she snubbed him. Probably he thought she was too insignificant to give offense—just a bad-tempered, silly little idiot whom a big man must bear with. He looked down from superior

heights and patronized her—and the red cow. She hoped the red cow had kicked him, but probably she hadn't—she was such a foolish, meek old thing. To calmly overlook one's best efforts in the line of snubs and talk cheerfully about the value of bran mash! Bran mash, indeed!

And then the irate young woman sat down on a pile of hay and sputtered until she happened to think how very well he had looked in his shirt-sleeves and in the absurd cap with a tuft of hair sticking out through a hole in it. Such a competent-looking man—but a horrid beast, just the same. She would pay Mr. Franklin for the work. He could keep the money himself if the boarder wouldn't take it and then at any rate she would have made it understood that she didn't choose to rest under an obligation to an impertinent stranger.

"Oh, Miss Holland!"

Janet peered carefully around the edge of the door. The boarder had vanished from sight, but Maria stood on the kitchen porch waving a dish-cloth beckoningly.

"Supper's ready," she called, and Janet went supperward with but little appetite for anything save the sudden and complete annihilation of a man with broad shoulders and laughing eyes and imperturbable calm.

"Ain't he handsome?" asked Maria as she passed the tea biscuit.

Miss Holland maintained a stony silence.

"He's got such an elegant figure," continued Maria meditatively, "and his eyes are perfectly splendid. Say, Miss Janet, did you notice how nice his voice was—all sort of curly around the edges as if it would crisp right up into laughing if it had half a chance?"

"If you are talking about the man who did the chores," said Miss Holland icily, "I thought him a most insufferable person, and we will drop the subject."

They dropped it; but out in the kitchen Maria unbosomed herself to the tortoise-shell cat.

"If ever I heard the like! 'Insuffer-

able person!' says she, and he doin' her chores and as handsome as a mounted p'liceman, and such a way of speakin' to one! She's queer, Miss Janet is. If she hadn't been queer she wouldn't have come up here in the first place."

The tortoise-shell cat stretched, showed her claws, narrowed her eyes, and settled back into indolent and somewhat bored repose. Perhaps she understood feminine nature better than Maria did. Why have claws, if not for occasional use?

### III

MEANWHILE the queer young woman had retreated to the hammock and lay there idly watching the shadows deepen and then thrill gradually with light once more until a great round moon peered over the lowest range of hills.

The hammock swung between two gnarled old apple-trees at the entrance to the garden and a host of sweet scents were afloat on the night wind. Across the masses of nodding bloom rolled the silver tide of moonlight. Out over the meadow it crept, across the brook, and on to where the black shadows marshaled their resisting forces among the hillside woods. A group of slender white birches on the edge of the woods caught the moonlight and held it, standing out sharply white against the dense dark pines.

The girl in the hammock watched the miracle listlessly. Under ordinary conditions she would have been a-quiver with the beauty of it, but now the workaday world, the world of faithless farmers and objectionable boarders, had her in its clutches and even the night magic could not free her.

Maria came through the front-door and down to the hammock, treading heavily as was her wont and casting uneasy glances wherever shadows lurked by tree or shrub.

"Lord, ain't it spooky, miss?" she said, with a shiver. "I do hate these country nights. They're that lonesome

they make me feel as if I'd swallowed one of the china nest eggs. It don't seem possible that Broadway's goin' on just the same, does it, miss?—with the electric signs and the trolleys and the crowd. I can't seem to realize that there's anything as sociable and cheerful as Broadway in the world. Where d'ye suppose that Jimmy Franklin is?"

Janet looked up at the girl sympathetically. Even in her own soul nature worship was at ebb tide.

"It does seem lonely," she said, with all the cheerfulness she could muster, "but Mr. Holland will be here to-morrow and will bring a farmer with him, and I've written for my old nurse. She said she'd come if I got into any trouble. Jimmy will be along soon and everything will be all right in the morning. Go in and light all the lamps, Maria. I'll come in after a little while."

A whippoorwill began its rasping, monotonous call down in the meadow and Maria clapped her hands over her ears.

"Drat that bird! I beg your pardon, miss, but I hate them whippoorwills and frogs worse'n poison. They give me the creeps. What'll we do if Jimmy don't come, miss?"

"Oh, he'll come."

"But maybe he won't and I can't never sleep in that house without a man or a sort of a man on the premises. There was an awful-looking tramp asleep down on the edge of the Franklin woods this afternoon."

"Don't be silly, Maria. Jimmy will be here, and if he didn't come we'd get along perfectly well without him."

Janet's tone was prodigiously self-reliant, but secretly she sympathized with Maria. Even "a sort of a man" like Jimmy would be a great comfort to nerve-shaken femininity.

Ten minutes later she saw a figure crossing the fields from the direction of the Franklin house and her heart gave a throb of relief. Jimmy had not failed her.

But as the Squire of Dames came onward through the moonlight it seemed to her that he looked tall and

sturdy for slim, gangling, loose-jointed Jimmy. She sat up in the hammock and watched more intently. For a moment the cherry-tree hid him, then he emerged from the shadow, taller, broader shouldered than ever. Jimmy never walked like that. A twinge of alarm ran through the watching girl. She and Maria were all alone, a mile and a half from neighbors. There were tramps abroad. Suppose that—and just then the man came between the lilac-bushes and walked down the garden path toward her with the moonlight shining full upon him.

Janet sank back with a little gasp of relief. It was only the boarder. So eminently desirable did he seem as an alternative to the tramp that for an instant she forgot how much she disliked him and how unwilling she was to meet him again.

His eyes had caught the gleam of her white frock, and he moved straight toward the hammock.

"I'm sorry to be a bearer of bad news, Miss Holland," he said, quite simply, evidently as much at ease as though the haughty young woman in the hammock had never given him occasion to think himself *persona non grata*, "but we've just heard that Jimmy and his father met with an accident this evening over near Pittsfield. The horses were frightened at a motor-car and plunged off a high bank. Jimmy got off with a cut head, but I'm afraid Mr. Franklin is more seriously hurt. They are both in the hospital at Pittsfield. Mrs. Franklin has just had a telegram; a boy rode over from the station with it."

"Poor woman! She must be dreadfully upset."

Sympathy for another woman made the girl forget her own plight and the offenses of the man before her, and her voice was soft, her face full of pity.

"Will she go to them?" she asked.

He shook his head.

"No, not until she hears more definitely. The despatch said the injuries were not dangerous and she doesn't seem greatly alarmed. She spoke of you at once and sent me over

to offer myself as a substitute for Jimmy."

The gentleness died swiftly out of Janet's face. More obligations! Surely the man must understand that she wanted no favors from him; that she heartily disliked him; that she loathed the sight of him.

"Thank you. That is quite unnecessary. Maria and I are not in the least nervous about staying alone."

She rose in dismissal as she spoke, but the man stood his ground.

"It really will not do for you to be alone here, Miss Holland. Your maid told me she was horribly timid, and if anything alarming should happen she would be of no earthly use to you. I don't like to be insistent, but I really think I must stay."

The girl's chin went up a fraction of an inch.

"I don't wish to be rude, but I much prefer your leaving us. Mrs. Franklin and her daughter are as much alone as Maria and I."

"But they are used to it," he urged, a touch of exasperation in his pleasant voice. "They are often left alone on the farm, and they are much older than you, and they can rely upon each other, while you would have only an ignorant, hysterical maid for company. It isn't right. Believe me, it isn't right, Miss Holland. I hate to force myself upon you, but you must allow me to stay."

"Must!" The elevated chin set stubbornly.

"I appreciate your solicitude, Mr.——"

"Townsend," he prompted.

"Ah, yes, Mr. Townsend—but I do not care to have you stay. Surely that should be enough for a gentleman. I am sorry you oblige me to be so explicit."

He looked down at her with an odd expression on his face—the expression of a grown-up who struggles to be patient with a very bad child. She read the look aright and her resentment boiled more fiercely than before.

"Will you assure Mrs. Franklin of my sympathy?" she said with cold

politeness. "Good night, Mr. Townsend."

He stood where he was while she turned her back upon him and walked to the house. Once inside the door, she closed and locked it; and then, surrendering to curiosity, flew to the window of the darkened dining-room in time to see the boarder crossing the meadow with swinging stride.

She had had her own way, and she was glad, but the house seemed very big and full of strange noises, and the outdoor world was a silent, mysterious place pregnant with alarms.

Maria was sleeping peacefully in a chair beside the kitchen table. Miss Holland awakened her.

"Come, Maria. You'll sleep in the little room next to mine tonight."

"Has Jimmy come?" asked the maid, rubbing her eyes.

"No; he isn't coming."

"Oh, Lord!" The exclamation was a wail.

"Are we goin' to be here all alone, miss?"

"Don't be a baby, Maria. There's nothing to harm us. Mr. Franklin and Jimmy have been hurt and are in the hospital."

Interest in the accident drove out Maria's fears temporarily; but as the two girls, each carrying a candle, went down the long upstairs hall toward their bedrooms, Maria gave a shriek, dropped her candle and clutched her mistress, whose candle promptly fell to the floor, leaving them in darkness.

"Something ran over my foot," sobbed Maria hysterically. "It must have been a rat. It was too big for a mouse. Oh, Miss Janet, whatever did you come to the country for? Oh, dear! oh, dear!"

Miss Holland's blood congealed at the word rat, but she shook Maria violently.

"If you dare to have hysterics, Maria Smith, I'll—I'll—beat you!" she announced sternly. "Feel for the matches on the hall table. No, wait. I'll get them. You'd just strew them on the floor. Here they are. Now we'll have a light. There aren't any rats.



Oh, Maria, do stop crying. You sound like a siren whistle. There, you see everything is all right. No, I'll carry both candles. You'd drop yours. . . . Maria, *shut up!* I'll empty the water pitcher over you if you don't behave like a rational human being. Now get into bed. No, I'm not going away. I'll wait until you are in bed, and I'll leave the door between the rooms open. There isn't a thing to be afraid of. That's only something falling off the tree on the roof of the porch, silly! Afraid? No, of course I'm not afraid. What would I be afraid of?"

Maria in bed, her mistress went into her own room holding her skirts well up around her ankles. She wasn't afraid of rats or mice, but if a mouse should run up one's skirts . . . She shuddered and lifted the skirts higher. A maple-tree twig brushing against her window made her drop the skirts and grasp one of the posts of the high four-poster bed, but she called herself uncomplimentary names and drew the curtains closely, shutting out the awesome shadows which flickered over the walls. Preparation for bed was a hasty ceremony, and she was glad to snuggle down into the pillows and draw the covers high around her chin; but going to bed and going to sleep proved to be two distinct and separate proceedings, and despite all her wooing sleep refused to come. She counted innumerable sheep going through a hole in a fence. She followed with her mental eyes breeze after breeze rippling across ripe fields of grain. She tried self-hypnotism of all kinds; but she only became more steadfastly awake.

Somewhere out in the darkness the whippoorwill was nagging the night with lament. A bullfrog's voice boomed sonorously from the direction of the wood. Pattering little feet scampered over the porch roof and over the attic floor. In the next room Maria, having relieved her own nerves at the expense of Janet's, snored in regular rhythmic beats. The world was full of sounds—faint, mysterious sounds, some of them. Of course there wasn't anyone walking

on the porch, but it certainly did sound as if . . . Janet sat up in bed and listened with every nerve tense. Then she lay down again saying disagreeable things to herself about cowards.

The room was too hot—that was it. It would be better to let in some air even if the shadows flocked in with it.

She rose hastily, went to the front window and ran the shade up. The moon had set, but a faint glow still lingered and a waft of perfume from the garden came in on the cool night air. Janet drew a dressing-robe round her shoulders and knelt beside the window. After all, the out-of-doors wasn't so lonesome as the house. The out-of-door night was so big and gentle and wonderful and restful, but the house seemed like a trap. She would be better off down there in the hammock than up between four walls. She looked longingly toward the hammock and her back stiffened, her eyes widened with alarm, her hands gripped the window-sill. The hammock was in shadow now; but it swayed lightly to and fro and a single point of yellow light, now brightening, now dulling, followed its swaying. There was some dark object in the hammock, too—someone was sitting there—and smoking! Yes, that was it. There was a man in the hammock and he was smoking a cigar!

A sick fear welled up in the girl's heart. The tramp! It must be the tramp. What was he waiting for?—to make sure that everyone was asleep? Perhaps he didn't want anything except a comfortable place to spend the night. Perhaps he didn't mean to do any harm—but it would have been so easy for him to hear that two women were alone on the farm. News travels so surprisingly fast in the country. And if he had heard it—Maria had said he was a dreadful-looking man. She would waken Maria. No; that would only make things worse. Billy had given her a revolver, but where was it? Up in one of the trunks in the attic. She wouldn't go up into that big black attic for anything. It was full of mice. She'd rather face the tramp; and she

wouldn't know how to use the revolver, anyway. It was an awful mistake not to teach girls how to shoot. What could French and music do for a girl if she happened to run across a tramp? It was lucky he hadn't heard her raise her window-shade. He evidently wasn't much afraid of being seen or he wouldn't dare smoke; but then why should *he* be afraid? What could two women do? If Mr. Townsend had only stayed! And suddenly she realized that she had only herself to thank for her plight. The boarder had offered to stay, had insisted upon staying, and her horrid pride had made her send him away. She was a cat, a nasty little cat. He had said she and Maria mustn't stay alone and he had been right. That was the disgusting thing about him. He was always right, and always proving her in the wrong—but if he were in the house he could drive the tramp away. He wouldn't be afraid of the ugliest kind of a tramp. She felt sure of that. He might be disagreeable, but he didn't seem at all like a coward.

But then he wasn't there—and the tramp was. The cigar light still wavered like a great glow-worm between the two apple-trees. What could she do? She must think; she must plan. She must be ready if worst came to worst. Maria would be no help at all. The boarder had prophesied that, too. Whatever was to be done she must do—but there really wasn't anything to be done unless she should get the revolver. Yes, that was it. She must get the revolver. Billy had shown her how to load the thing and surely she could make it go off. Even if she didn't hit the tramp she might scare him away. It was silly to be afraid of mice, and attics weren't any worse than other rooms—except for the black corners back under the eaves.

She slipped on her bed shoes and stole softly out into the hall, not lighting her candle until she reached the closet in the attic stairs. There was no front window in the attic, so the light could not shine out as a warning to the man in the hammock.

In the tray of a trunk among a col-

lection of ribbons and silk stockings she found the revolver and cartridges packed neatly in a box, and grasping the box she hurried to the stairs, where she sat down upon one of the steps, took the revolver and loaded it, handling it with gingerly precaution and half expecting it to go off of its own volition. At the foot of the stairs she blew out her light and was stepping stealthily along the hallway toward her room when she stumbled against a table upon which Maria had that afternoon piled a number of framed pictures just arrived from town. The table went over. There was a crash of breaking glass and splintering wood. Several of the heaviest pictures rolled between the baluster spindles and landed upon the floor of the hall below. Maria, wakened by the noise, started in upon a series of ear-splitting shrieks, and Janet Holland rushed breathlessly into her own room, the revolver grasped tightly in her hand. The mischief was done. There was no sense in trying to quiet Maria. The man would know that they were awake. Perhaps it would frighten him away for the time being. Perhaps it would make him feel that there was no use in waiting and that he might as well break into the house at once.

She crept to the window and looked out. Her worst fears were realized. The tramp had left the hammock and was hurrying straight toward the house, a bulky shape, black against the night. Now he was almost at the front-door—almost under her window. For a moment her courage failed her entirely and something gripped her throat, choking her, dimming her sight, stopping her breath. Then she found her voice—a trembling ghost of a voice, but still a voice which she dropped shakily out into the darkness.

"Don't come any nearer. Stay where you are or I'll shoot." said the voice, with a pitiful pretense of fierceness.

The man stopped short and started to speak, but, with the threat, the girl's nerves had given way. She shut her eyes tightly and, as a nervous

chill shook her body, her finger tightened spasmodically upon the trigger of the revolver which she still held pointed out into the night.

There was a flash, a report, a muttered exclamation from below the window, a scream from Maria, and Janet fainted in a crumpled heap on the floor beside the window, the revolver falling from her limp hand.

#### IV

For a few moments there was silence, broken at intervals by a stifled moan from the room where Maria lay quaking in abject fear with the bedclothes over her head. Janet heard the moans as her mind struggled back to consciousness and fumbled helplessly with scattered memories.

That must be Maria—but what had happened? Oh, yes, a revolver had gone off. And the tramp—what had become of the tramp? She had fainted and what had happened then? Was the man in the house, or had he run away? She must look out of the window, but she couldn't. She felt so queer and wobbly. And then, as she lay there on the floor trying to bring order out of the chaos in her brain, a voice penetrated to the part of that bewildered brain which had been accustomed to receiving impressions of sound. Someone was calling her name, or was she imagining that she heard it?

"Miss Holland! Oh, Miss Holland!" There it was again. The voice was low and gentle and reassuring, but clear as a bell.

"Miss Holland!"

It couldn't be Maria. Maria hadn't a voice like that. Somewhere she had heard such a voice, but where?

"Miss Holland!"

The sound came in through the window. Yes, surely it came in from out-of-doors—but how could that be? No; she must be dreaming or there was something wrong with her head, or—

"Miss Holland! Don't be frightened.

It's I—Townsend. For God's sake speak to me! Are you hurt?"

In a daze the girl rose to her knees and leaned across the window-sill. Only the starlight waned with the darkness now, and at first she could see nothing save vague tree shapes and a sea of inky shadow. Then she made out a something blacker than the darkness on the grass below her window. A man was sitting there, and as she recoiled the voice came again, louder, more urgent, more agitated than before.

"Miss Holland, are you hurt?"

Unquestionably the man was Mr. Townsend; but why was he sitting on the grass, and where was the tramp?

She leaned further out of the window.

"We are all right—just scared. There was a tramp, and my revolver went off and I think I must have fainted. What are you doing? Why don't you get up? Did you hear the revolver? Did you see the man?"

An odd little laugh came up from below and the man answered her questions in their order.

"I'm sitting on the ground. I don't get up because I don't believe I can. I not only heard the revolver, I felt it—and I *am* the man!"

There was an eloquent silence while Janet tried to digest the answers. Only one of them—the last—really pierced her brain fog.

"Wasn't there a tramp?" she asked.

"I didn't see one!"

"Were you in the hammock?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

He didn't answer at once. When the answer came it rang defiantly.

"To be near you."

"But I sent you away."

"I came back."

"Didn't it occur to you that you might frighten us?"

"I waited until so late that I thought you would be asleep. It wasn't safe for you to be here alone and I thought I could sit in the hammock and smoke until morning and then go away. I was doing it for my own satisfaction, you see—not yours. There was no use

arguing with you, but I couldn't leave you and that foolish maid here alone."

Back somewhere in the girl's brain dawned the idea that there was something rather nice about being protected in spite of oneself, but a wave of resentment snuffed the fluttering idea out.

He had said that there was no use arguing with her. Evidently he didn't consider her a rational human being.

"You have given us a very dramatic night," said a crisp, cold voice from the window. "Fortunately we have survived it, though Maria seems to be having a continuous fit in the next room. Might I suggest that it would be quite as well for you to get up and go home now? I would be glad of a chance for a little sleep before breakfast-time."

Again that rueful little laugh down among the shadows.

"I should be charmed to fall in with your suggestion," said the man, "but, as a matter of fact, the thing is quite out of my hands and on the knees of the gods. I can't get up and go home."

Janet caught her breath sharply.

"Can't get up? Why not?"

He hesitated.

"Well, you see—the fact is— Oh, I *have* made a cheerful mess of things, Miss Holland, but my good intentions would provide miles of paving for hell."

"But why can't you get up?"

The man laughed in a weak, deprecatory way.

"You are a good shot, Miss Holland. Every girl ought to be taught to use a revolver."

The girl's face went white in the darkness.

"I didn't hit you?" she asked tremulously.

"You jolly well did," said her victim with admirable cheerfulness; "but I deserved it—running up to the house without any warning like a bally idiot because I heard someone fall and someone else scream. By the way, who did fall, and who did scream and what was it all about?"

She brushed the questions aside impatiently.

"But if you are hurt you must have

a doctor. You can't stay out there. Do you think it's serious?"

"Oh, no. The bullet got me in the leg. I think I can get up on the porch, if you don't mind, and it won't be long until morning. Don't worry. I'll get home some way or other as soon as it is light."

"We are not utter barbarians, Mr. Townsend," said a curt voice, and the shade was drawn over the window with a vicious swish.

An instant later lights glimmered faintly behind it. There was a sound of voices in the house. Presently candles flickered on the stairway and their light crept out through the little glass panes around the front door. The door opened, and in the doorway a slim girl in a shimmering pink negligée stood peering out into the darkness, while behind her loomed a clumsy figure in a blue calico Mother Hubbard, holding a lighted lantern high above her head.

"Mr. Townsend," the girl in pink called softly, fearfully.

"Here I am, Miss Holland," the man answered with profound self-abasement in his tone.

"It's a beastly shame to trouble you this way. If Maria will just help me for a moment I can hobble up to the porch and——"

"We'll bring you into the house," said the young woman firmly. "It may be useless to argue with me, but I have moments of almost human intelligence and decency." She took the lantern from the maid and the two women went out to where the man sat inertly on the grass.

"If you'll just put your hands under my arms and give me a lift, Maria," he said apologetically. "The wound doesn't amount to anything, you know, but I've lost a little blood and I'm rather groggy. That's right. Thank you. Now, if you don't mind my resting an arm on your shoulder." Maria presented a sturdy shoulder and leaning heavily on it he took a few steps, his lips whitening with pain and weakness. Janet moved quickly to his side.

"Lean on me, too," she said anxiously. "It will be easier and I'm quite strong. Really I am."

Townsend slipped an arm along the firm young shoulders, accepting the help as simply and impersonally as it was offered, but the contact sent the blood he had not lost leaping wildly through his veins. After all, being shot by a girl one admired had its advantages. What was a little blood-letting more or less compared with this wonderful sense-stirring nearness? He was glad that their progress was slow. Perhaps he might have made it more rapid had he bent his every energy toward it, but why hurry a good moment into a delightful memory?

In the big living-room, at last, the two women deposited their charge upon the couch and stood looking down at him while he closed his eyes and lay still and white against the pillows.

"Whatever will we do, miss?" asked Maria, wavering on the verge of tears.

"I'll be all right now until morning," said the man, opening his eyes and looking steadfastly at Maria for fear of the story his eyes might tell to the girl with the beautiful, anxious face and the clinging pink robe. "We'll get Mrs. Franklin over here in the morning and she'll take me home with her and send for a doctor. You'll both go to bed and to sleep now, won't you?"

"Where did I hit you?" asked Janet.

He had pulled an afghan over him as he dropped down upon the couch so that she might not see the dark wet spot spreading over his knickers and running down into his heavy golf stockings. Now a consideration for her couch smote him suddenly.

"Oh, if you'll just give me something thick to lay under my leg. I've got my handkerchief and necktie tied round above the wound, but I guess it's still bleeding a little and I don't want to spoil your couch."

Janet's face hardened into lines of firm resolve.

"Where did I hit you?" she repeated.

"Just above the knee. It's really

nothing, you know. Those things always bleed."

"Maria, get the peroxide of hydrogen and some warm water and towels. I have some antiseptic bandage somewhere."

"B-b-but—" stammered Townsend.

The girl was gone.

When she came back with a roll of bandage in her hand Maria was ready with the peroxide and water and the man was sitting up on the couch expostulating hotly.

"She mustn't do it. It will make her ill. I'll do anything that has to be done myself," he was saying as Janet entered the room. She walked up to the couch with the best imitation of trained-nurse manner which she could achieve.

"It isn't necessary," began the man. "I really can't allow—"

"There's no sense in being foolish about the thing," said the superior young person. "The wound has to be dressed and you can't do it well alone, and Maria wouldn't be of any use except in holding a lamp. Probably she'd drop that. You'll have to cut the bottom of your trousers a little. Here are the scissors. And just roll down your stocking. I don't know much about bandaging, but maybe you do and I know peroxide of hydrogen is just the thing. The doctor used it for John when he chopped his leg. I wish we could get you upstairs to a bed, but I suppose we can't."

She was talking cheerfully and steadily, but at the sight of the blood her lips trembled a little and a sickening nausea swept over her.

"No; you'd better let me wash it," she heard herself saying a long way off; but the sickness passed and she bathed the leg with a steady hand.

"Now the peroxide. It doesn't hurt. It just fizzes. I wish I were an expert on bandages, but I guess this will do. Do they always pin them with safety-pins? There! We'll have a doctor the first thing in the morning. Do you feel dreadfully?"

She rose from her knees and stood



looking down at him, a calm-eyed, steady-lipped, womanly little woman quite unlike the unreasonable and haughty young person of the brook and the barn and the hammock. Her wavy brown hair had been carelessly drawn into a loose coil at the nape of her neck and several soft locks had broken from their moorings and curled distractingly around her temples and her ears. Perhaps it was wearing her hair low instead of high that robbed her of her awesome look—but there was a difference in her eyes, too. Their brown depths were troubled, but there was no scorn in them—only a frank concern and human friendliness.

The man's heart went out to her, but he kept his heart out of his eyes.

"You are a brick," he said gratefully, but with no more fervor than was consistent with gratitude.

"There's nothing else you need?"

He shook his head. "Nothing."

"If you should call, Maria or I would hear you."

"Thank you. I'm sure I shall sleep."

"Good night." She lingered for a moment in the doorway. "I'm very sorry," she said, with as much of pride as of penitence in her admission. "I'm terribly sorry I shot you. It might have been a horrible thing—it is bad enough as it is, but, you know—"

"I had no business to be here," he finished.

She nodded assent; then, afraid of being ungenerous to a fallen foe: "But you meant to be kind. I'm quite sure of that. Good night."

For a long time after the house was quiet he saw her standing there in the doorway, with the candlelight flickering over her face and over the white throat which the laces of her gown left free.

"Henry, my friend," he said to himself, half laughingly, half gravely, "you've a bullet hole in your leg, but your heart is all shot to pieces."

## V

WEAKNESS and fatigue made Townsend's slumber so profound that he did

not hear the morning *Jubilate* of the birds nor the first stir of life in the house. Footsteps went lightly up and down the stairs, an occasional clash of pots and pans echoed from the kitchen, but still he slept. When he awakened the unfamiliar surroundings puzzled him at first, but a twinge of pain in his leg brought swift memory. The shades were drawn, but there was evidently broad daylight behind them and he felt in his pocket for his watch. Eight o'clock! Scandalous waking hour for a farmhand. He had expected to be down in his room at the Franklins' before that. Poor Mrs. Franklin! All the masculine props of her household shattered at one fell swoop. What should he tell the Franklins?—not that Miss Holland had shot him. The tale would go echoing over the country, joining dramatic features at every bound, and there was no telling what form it might assume within a week. No; he had fallen over a tree root and his revolver had gone off accidentally. Miss Holland and Maria had been Good Samaritans—but where were Miss Holland and Maria? It wouldn't do to shriek for his hostess, but perhaps he might call Maria.

He did call her, and at the third call she came galumphing in, her broad face shining with excitement and friendly interest.

"How are you this morning, sir? Better? That's good. It don't hurt you much? Wasn't it an awful night, sir? It's enough to turn one's hair gray, such a night as that. If Mr. William don't come this morning, I'll go to New York on the evening train. I wouldn't spend another such night, not for all the wealth of the Injuns. No, sir, I wouldn't."

"Where is Miss Holland? I hope she's not ill?" inquired Townsend with most casual politeness.

"Oh, bless you, she's been gone hours."

"Gone?" The man's heart sank like lead.

"Yes; she got up at six o'clock and went for the doctor—rode Jerry, and we certainly did have trouble getting

him saddled. He just swells himself up twict his natural size. It's time Miss Janet and the doctor was getting here, I should say. Could you drink a cup of coffee? I was to give you some coffee and toast, but nothin' else till the doctor's seen you. There's somebody comin' up the drive now. I guess it's them."

She went out on the side veranda.

"Yep, it's them," she called to Townsend. "The doctor's got his buggy and Miss Janet's riding. I'll bet she's brought him along on the run. Jerry's a fine traveler and she was awful worried."

Townsend tried to sit up, moved his leg, and dropped back among the pillows.

His Dear Lady Disdain was paying off scores with a will. She had been out since six o'clock after a doctor for him. She couldn't possibly have had more than two hours' sleep. What an infernal ass he had been to get shot on her doorstep; and yet—and yet he couldn't really feel unhappy over the affair.

"He's awake, Maria?" asked a fresh young voice with a thrill of anxiety in it that set his pulses thrilling in response.

"Can we go in? All right. Come, doctor."

Really, the doorways of this old farmhouse had a trick of framing most delectable pictures. The memory of a girl in pink with a candle in her hand and with traces of weariness and pallor in her lovely face faded for a time before this new vision of a radiant Amazon in riding-skirt and shirt-waist and sailor hat, with a brilliant color in her cheeks and a sparkle in her eyes, despite their looks of anxious inquiry.

"Good morning," said the vision. "Here's the doctor. Dr. Bartlett, Mr. Townsend. The doctor has come all the way from Pittsfield, heavenly angel that he is. I didn't know of anyone around here whom I could trust."

"I assure you it's a sheer case of kidnapping," laughed the doctor. "I don't take jaunts like this except in extreme cases, but when this young

lady dropped in on me before I'd had my breakfast and informed me that I was coming over here as soon as I'd had my coffee—well, I drank my coffee and came. Being a man and a brother you will understand. Now, Miss Holland, some warm water and a basin and I'll have a look at this leg.

"Funny business," he added after the girl left the room. "Lucky thing she didn't shoot you through the head. Shot with her eyes shut, she tells me. Isn't that the devil's luck? If she had aimed at you she probably wouldn't have come within a mile of you.

"Do you know," he went on, more gravely, "I think I'd change this story a little for public circulation. You won't always be on hand to explain fully, and country gossip beats yellow journalism by a length."

"Yes. I'm convinced I accidentally shot myself," said Townsend.

"Careless lad!" laughed the doctor. "She's so frank she'll want to tell the truth, and she'll be hot when we suggest the reason for improving on facts. You'd better let me reason with her. I'm an old man."

Remembering former attempts to convince a certain young woman through process of reason, Townsend agreed to the proposal with something like lively gratitude in his eyes.

When Janet came back with the water Dr. Bartlett declined her offer of assistance, and she went out on the veranda, where presently he joined her, finding her in eager conversation with a tall, thin, stooping lad with a large plaster on his head and a pair of blue eyes twinkling keenly below a stubborn mop of fiery red hair.

"Jimmy has come!" she announced with the air of one bearing glad tidings. "Of course that doesn't mean much to you, but it means everything to me. I didn't know what on earth we would do with the horses and cows. Of course I could feed them, but—can you milk, doctor? I'm afraid you'd have had to try if Jimmy hadn't come."

The doctor was a man of dignity and importance in his profession, but as he looked at the girl in the willow chair

it was borne in upon him that if she had said the word he would probably have left his Pittsfield patients to suffer and have done her milking for her.

"God bless my soul, but you're a masterful young woman," he said with genial fatherliness. "There's a young fool in here who needs masterful treatment. I've told him he must keep off that leg for a few days and he talks nonsense about going back to some Franklin place as soon as he's had some coffee. Now, he can't go. That's understood. At least I understand it. Just make him understand it, will you?"

"I'll try," said Miss Holland meekly. "Come in and see him, Jimmy."

Naturally Townsend obeyed the doctor's orders. Jimmy was sent home to bring over some clean clothing for the invalid and was appointed chief nurse and valet. A serving-room on the first floor was temporarily converted into a bedroom and the injured man was installed there. Through it all the doctor stayed and did an able-bodied man's work. "Never mind, my child, I'll send you a bill for professional services that will make your hair stand up," he said gaily as he bade Janet good-bye—and then he reasoned with her. What he said Townsend never knew, but it apparently had the desired result, for Maria was told sternly that Mr. Townsend had accidentally shot himself. Townsend had himself explained the situation to Jimmy early in the day.

"You don't want Miss Holland to be talked about all over the countryside and written up in the papers, do you?" he had asked.

"Not on yer life," answered Jimmy promptly, his freckled face flushing.

"Well, then, just remember that I had an accident and my revolver—went off."

"Sure thing," said Jimmy.

The day wore on with no sign of the expected brother and the much-to-be-desired farmer. About four o'clock Miss Holland tapped at Townsend's door, and, bidden to enter, appeared in riding-clothes, bearing a vase of fra-

grant June roses which she deposited on the little table beside the bed.

"There's a bit of the outdoor sweetness for you," she said. All the aggressiveness had gone out of her manner toward him, but in its place had come a certain cool, kindly aloofness, a self-reliant remoteness which irked him rather more than vehement antagonism. She was exceedingly civil, considerate, hospitable, and would have been the same to the tramp had she shot him in person rather than by proxy. That was what her altogether charming manner clearly and lucidly explained, and, being a mere man, Townsend did not understand the protest against the embarrassing intimacy into which they had been flung.

"You are going for a ride?" he asked, with a restless discontent in his tone. It was hard to be laid by the heels on a sunshiny June day—and to be an object of charity to boot. All humbug about his keeping still, anyway. She had said something about reading to him; but of course, he couldn't expect her to give up her time to a man just because she had put a bullet into his leg and an arrow into his heart.

"Yes; I'm going to the station," she was saying, as she looped the muslin curtains further back to let in more air. "If Billy doesn't come on the afternoon train, surely there will be a telegram from him. Of course, it isn't so bad now Jimmy is at home, but I do want Billy awfully."

There was a pathetic little droop to the corners of her mouth. Lucky Billy!—and yet, after all, to be her brother—no, on the whole, Townsend was glad he was not Billy.

"Maria will come if you call," Miss Holland went on. "Jimmy will be busy now until supper-time. He has most of the evening work to do on both farms, you know—but I'll be back before long. Maybe Billy will be with me, and he'll entertain you. Billy's a dear."

What Townsend thought about Billy's sister he did not dare to put into words.

She came home without Billy and

with a distinct accentuation of the droop at the corners of her mouth.

"He didn't come?" asked Townsend as she followed Maria and a supper tray into his room.

She shook her head and he knew she did it because she was afraid to trust her voice. She was neither a haughty princess now nor a self-reliant womanly woman—just a tired, disappointed small girl who would cry if she were not ashamed to do it and who wanted somebody big and strong to lift responsibilities from her shoulders.

The man on the bed consigned Billy to the nether regions. What right had a fellow—even a brother—to fail a girl like this one?

"There was a telegram," Janet said. "You can read it."

She held the yellow paper out toward him and he read:

"Mr. Holland fishing in Maine. Do not know how to reach him. Can I do anything?"

"JOHN PLANT."

"Mr. Plant is something at the factory," Janet explained, and then the tears brimmed over her eyes and began rolling down her cheeks.

"Oh, I say, don't—please don't," begged the man on the bed. "Things aren't as bad as all that. You're tired and shaken up after last night's experience. You mustn't be so unhappy."

"I w-was just h-holding on till Billy c-c-could c-come, and he won't c-c-come for ages, and I d-don't know w-what to d-do with the c-cows or the g-garden or y-you, or anything."

"Poor little girl!" said Townsend softly.

She lifted a tear-stained face.

"I'm not a poor little girl!" she said hotly, and fled hastily from the room.

"What was a fellow to do or say?" groaned the man. "Damn this leg! I'm going to get out of this. It just adds to her worrying—having me here. I hadn't any business to promise her or the doctor that I'd stay, and a bad promise is better broken than kept. She is a poor little girl—bless her! Idiotic performance—her coming off to the end of the world and trying to

run a farm all alone. Her brother must be a poor lot to let her do it."

Then he smiled. "Well, I don't know either," he amended. "If she had set her head on doing it I suppose there wasn't much scope for brotherly interference short of a straitjacket."

He did not see his hostess again that night, though he watched the door eagerly and started at every step in the hall.

Jimmy spent the evening with him, and Jimmy and he had grown to be very good chums indeed, with a surprising number of tastes and opinions in common and a strange appreciation of each other's "good points," but Jimmy's society did not prove altogether satisfying on that particular evening, although the boy was primed with interesting news. He and his yellow dog, Bingo, had won a bloody victory in the fiercest woodchuck fight of the season that very afternoon, and in consequence Bingo's natural dignity was marred by a rakish bandage over his left eye and ear, but the single eye which he fixed upon Townsend from his place beside the foot of the bed gleamed with triumph. Both Jimmy and the dog had felt so sure of Townsend's sympathy and enthusiasm, yet that third member of the friendly trio listened to the tale of battle, murder and sudden death with a listless indifference that amazed and grieved the two heroes.

"What's wrong with him?" inquired Bingo's one eye and Jimmy shook his head pityingly.

"Leg hurt you much?" he asked sympathetically. Only acute physical suffering could account for such a deplorable change as this.

"Not much, old man," Townsend replied, rousing himself slightly.

The dog and the boy exchanged skeptical glances. Of course no fellow was going to admit that a thing hurt him, but when one loses interest in the really important affairs of life there's something wrong.

"You know that pool under the big boulder?" said Jimmy, starting off on another tack.

Townsend nodded.

"Well, I tried that other fly you gave me in there this afternoon and I got the biggest trout yet. I wanted to show him to you, but you was asleep and Maria wouldn't let me come in. Say, he's a dandy. Two pounds if he's an ounce. I fixed him up in a box out in the spring and you're goin' to have him for breakfast."

No responsive excitement even over this stupendous news! The freckled boyish face clouded over with anxiety.

"Them little orioles up in the orchard is learnin' to fly. The black cat 'most got one of them this morning. I licked her like smoke, but it won't do any good. Cats are made that way. I dunno as it's any worse than our eatin' trout. That black cat's the greatest hunter I ever seen. She's brought in everything from a grasshopper to a baby rabbit. Last year she come into the kitchen proud as could be and put a garter snake down on the floor right on Ida's feet. I heard the rumpus 'way out at the barn and went runnin' in with the pitchfork, and there was Ida on the table yellin' and the cat playin' around with the snake as gay as could be. I just picked up the snake and put it in my pocket and then Ida clumb down and called me a horrid, nasty little wretch. That's all the gratitude you get out of women. The cat was dead sore on me, too, because I'd spoiled her fun. It's awful easy to be unpopular with women folks, ain't it?"

"It is," assented Townsend with profound conviction. "Look here, Jimmy," he went on, "I'm worried about something."

Jimmy hitched his chair closer to the bed and Bingo sidled up until his bandaged head rested on his master's knee.

"Thought so," said the boy laconically.

"You see, it's this way, Jimmy. Miss Holland has a lot of things to bother her and I'm one of the things."

Jimmy looked puzzled.

"Her brother hasn't come, and it's embarrassing for her to have a strange man laid up in her house, and yet she can't turn a sick man out. Now you and I must fix this thing up."

"How?" asked Jimmy.

"My leg's much better. There's no reason at all why I shouldn't move over to your house, but Miss Holland thinks that because the doctor said I must keep quiet it's her duty to keep me here no matter how annoying and troublesome it is for her."

"Well, she shot you." The boy's tone implied that his sympathies were with his own sex.

"No, I shot myself. You haven't forgotten that, have you?"

"You're terrible awkward with a gun." Jimmy grinned derisively, then lapsed into seriousness.

"What are we goin' to do?"

"It's up to me to get out of here without giving her a chance to be generous, and you'll have to help me. You survey up the field road about half-past five tomorrow morning and hitch the horses out there by the tool-house. Miss Holland and Maria sleep on the other side of the house, so they won't see you. Then come in by the side-door here and help me get into my things and out to the carriage. It won't hurt me and you can have me in my room down at your house in a jiffy."

Jimmy's lips puckered for a whistle. There was a furrow between his brows.

"She'll be madder'n a wet hen," he said dubiously.

"I'll leave a note for her explaining why I've done it—that I only want to save her trouble."

The boy shook his head.

"Oh, explainin' don't make any difference with women. You can explain till you're deaf an' dumb an' blind and they'll feel just the same way about it they did at first. She'll be swearin' mad at you and she'll be just about as mad at me."

"No, I'll fix it all right for you anyway," Townsend urged. "She told me tonight she didn't know what to do about my being here—and she cried about it."

"Honest?" Jimmy's eyes were incredulous.

"On my honor, Jimmy. Now you see I've got to go. We can't have her

feeling that way, can we? You'll help, won't you?"

The shock of red hair flopped with the energy of the boy's nod.

"You bet—she'll be mad just the same; but a fellow can't have a girl cryin' around. Sometimes I'm so glad I'm a boy I feel like plumpin' right down on my knees anywhere I happen to be and prayin' some thanks. Kit Prentiss—she's the girl in the pink dress you saw me with at the sociable—she cries when she ain't happy and she cries when she's mad and she cries when she's scared and she cries when she's tired. Darned if a fellow can tell when she's goin' to cry. It don't last more'n a minute, but it's kind of up-settin' while it lasts. Funny about women bein' so showery that way. I guess it's because they ain't got much muscle. Fightin' works one's feelin's off considerable. What time d'you want me to come?"

"Half-past five. You'll surely be here?"

"Sure thing."

"That's a good fellow. Just give me that portfolio out of my trunk tray before you go, will you? That's it. Thank you. Good night, old man."

Bingo gravely presented a paw, Jimmy nodded a cheerful adieu, and the two vanished through the open door. When they had gone Townsend leaned over the little table beside the head of his bed and buried his face in the roses that stood there. Then he began to write. Sheet after sheet of paper was torn into small bits and thrown aside, but at last the note was written and sealed.

"But she probably *will* be angry, God bless her," said the man to himself as he blew out his candle.

## VI

THE offender and the aider and abettor were true prophets. Janet was angry, furiously angry. Maria reported as much to Jimmy after taking to her mistress the note which she had found on Mr. Townsend's table.

"You'd just better clear out until the worst of it is over, Jimmy. She'll be down on you, too, and you're the nearest, so you'll catch it," advised Maria; but Jimmy stood his ground and went tranquilly on with the barn work, though with an ear strained to catch the first rumbling of the approaching storm.

"Better get it over," said the young philosopher. "She won't fire me when there ain't nobody else to milk and feed."

The early morning manœuvre had been executed with precision and ease. By six o'clock Townsend was installed in his own room at the Franklin home, and at half-past six Jimmy was telling the story to Maria in the Holland kitchen.

Five minutes later Janet Holland, who had wakened early and was counting her troubles over 'twixt morning naps, heard a tap on her door. She had just been bemoaning the responsibility and embarrassment thrust upon her by the presence of a bullet-riddled stranger within her gates, and so busily occupied was she in sympathizing with herself that she ignored the knock. To have a man one cordially disliked forced upon one's hospitality was hard. Of course he had been nice about it and it was embarrassing for him, too; but she wished to heaven he were anywhere save under her roof.

Another knock.

"Come in," called Miss Holland, and Maria entered with a note in her hand and excitement in her face.

"He's gone, ma'am."

Miss Holland sat up in bed.

"Who's gone?"

"Mr. Townsend."

"Maria, you're crazy!"

"No'm, I ain't. You'll see in the letter. Jimmy, he took him home early this morning. He left ten dollars for me, ma'am, and the note for you."

Maria gazed longingly at the note, with curiosity written large upon her face; but Miss Holland was looking out of the window with flushed cheeks and closely pressed lips.



"If you'd read what he says, ma'am?"

Janet tore open the envelope and read the few lines which had called for so much waste paper and mental effort, but the reading did not lessen the look of wrath and she did nothing toward satisfying the curiosity of the attentive Maria.

"Mr. Townsend was at liberty to leave whenever he chose. It was hardly necessary to sneak away from the house before daylight. I'll be down to breakfast in a half-hour, Maria."

"That's all she said," explained Maria to Jimmy. "But as for what she *looked*—you'd have thought he'd taken all the silver and jewelry with him. She's that peppery, Miss Janet is, and she never did like that man. Now, I'd call him real handsome and pleasant and free with his money, but there's no accounting for tastes."

Later, Jimmy looked up from rubbing Dandy's lame leg to meet the eyes of a stern young woman who stood in the barn-door.

"I'm surprised, Jimmy, that you would do something that the doctor had forbidden and that you knew to be wrong," said a severely disapproving voice.

"Well, Mr. Townsend, he put it to me that it would relieve you a lot and make things better all around. He said you was too polite to fire him and that he'd just better beat it without saying anything to you, so I did what he told me to. Sorry you're mad about it, Miss Holland."

"I'm not mad. I'm just surprised and indignant, Jimmy. I never heard of anything so rude, and Mr. Townsend's leg will be worse and then it will be all my fault because I hurt him—and it was a horrid, selfish thing for him to do. He might have considered me in the matter."

Shades of all misunderstood lovers! He might have considered her!

"You may tell him from me, Jimmy, that he was quite at liberty to be as imprudent as he chose to be and that I regret he considered it necessary to be

discourteous as well. Naturally I am relieved to have no further responsibility in regard to him."

There was a fine inconsistency in her conclusion, but neither Jimmy nor she observed it at the moment, for their attention was distracted by the chug, chug of a motor close at hand. Up the crooked lane a huge red car came plunging at perilous speed and the two goggled demons on the front seat yelled cheerful greeting to the girl in the barn-door.

"Hello, sis!" shouted the driver as the car caromed off the well curb and came to a stop in the herb bed.

A radiant girl, half-laughing, half-crying, sped down the path, threw herself into a pair of muddy arms and kissed a grimy but beaming face.

"Billy!" she cried ecstatically. "Oh, Billy, you angel!"

"Has it been so bad as that, Ginty?" asked the angel in disguise. "Here's Morton."

Miss Holland did not embrace Mr. Morton, but her welcome was a satisfactory sort of thing for a man whose face told the story that was written in his.

"Did you get my telegram?" she asked as she led the way into the house.

"Just last night at Springfield. Fish were shy. Black flies weren't and we quit the woods. Morton and I went down to spend a few days with John Williams at Springfield, and Plant caught me there. Of course I wanted to come right away and Morton offered to come along and Williams suggested we should take his car and hand it over to him in New York later, so we bumped ourselves along. Bully night's run. Death and destruction in our wake. Two punctures. What's all this about that farmer?"

When Jimmy went home at noon for dinner he was brimming over with news.

"Her brother's come!" he announced as he opened Townsend's door. The man on the bed smiled. "And her young man, too," added Jimmy. The smile disappeared.

"Say, they're corkers!" gurgled Jimmy. "They came from Springfield last night in a big automobile, but they don't want no sleep. Mr. Billy, he's been all over the farm—ain't missed a corner of it. He's a jolly cuss—wants to know about everything. Went right at it himself and fixed Dandy's leg up, as if he was a vet. Asks more questions to a minute than anybody I ever seen. Wants to know what everything cost and why and how. He says Miss Holland's been robbed. Guess he's right, too. He's business, he is. If he'd just stay, things'd hum on that farm. Darned if those White Leghorn hens ain't got busy layin' already. They haven't laid an egg since anybody can remember, but I got five eggs out of there this noon. They just realized there was a man on the place now and something'd have to be doin'."

"But the other man?" asked Townsend with a profound indifference.

"Oh, he's all right, too, but he's different. Good-looker, he is—does most of his lookin' at Miss Holland. He's dead gone on her and don't care who knows it. She ain't one of the ones that don't know it, an' I guess she likes it all right. They went around the farm, too, but they didn't notice nothin' much. Mr. Morton, he didn't see anything except her and they kind of stayed behind and talked while I explained things to Mr. Billy. Say, they're a fine-lookin' couple all right. You'd ought to see them.

"Miss Janet, she was rowing me about you when the visitors came along. She was mad about your leavin' all right. Let's see, what's this she says to tell you?

"Tell him," she says, 'that he was quite at liberty to be as imprudent as he chose to be and that I regret he thought he had to be discourteous, too. I'm glad not to have any more responsibility about him.'

"That's something like the way she put it. Oh, she was mad clean through—thought you'd go and get worse and lose your leg or somethin' and then she'd feel responsible. I guess she

hated to have you there, but was afraid to have you go. Say, how is your leg? You look kind of miserable. Ain't worse, are you?"

Townsend felt miserable, but the seat of the misery wasn't in his leg.

"Oh, no. Moving didn't hurt me," he said wearily. "It tired me a bit. Staying in bed for a day or two takes the tuck out of a man. I'm glad Miss Holland's brother has come. Cut along now, Jimmy. I want a nap."

But he didn't sleep. Instead he lay in the darkened room and watched a girl and a man roaming along the wood paths and over the upland meadows. The girl was bare-headed and the June breezes ruffled her sunny brown hair into distracting waves and curls about the dear face with its Irish-gray eyes and its saucy nose and its mutinous mouth and its firm little chin. The face was smiling happily and upturned to the gaze of the man. He was "a good-looker," that man.

"Oh, damn the luck!" groaned Townsend. "It's a curse to have a lively imagination."

Late in the afternoon Mrs. Franklin came to the boarder's door bearing a card carefully held between forefinger and thumb.

"The man said to give you that," she said, reading the card with painstaking care. "It says Mr. William McAlpin Holland. Must be Miss Holland's brother, I should think. D'ye want to see him, sir?"

"Will you show him in, please?" said Townsend, with a glow of pleasure in his eyes.

A moment later a well-groomed, alert, fresh-faced young man came into the room with smiling salutation and outstretched hand.

"Well, Mr. Townsend, as head of the family I offer you humble apologies. I understand my sister got an idea into her head that it was open season for tramps and all men looked alike to her in the dark. Joking aside, though, are you much hurt, old man?"

The honest kindness in the query moved Townsend's heart. Small won-

der that the girl was fond of her brother Billy.

"Funniest thing I ever heard, her hitting you," Billy went on. "Ten thousand to one shot. I'm aw'fly sorry about it, Townsend—aw'fly sorry. If there's anything on earth I can do——"

"The thing really isn't worth bothering about," the victim said genially. "Miss Holland was very kind and the affair was harder on her than on me. I feel very badly about having given her so much responsibility and annoyance."

"Piffle!" The exclamation was expressive if inelegant. "So far as I can see you acted aw'fly well all around, and I'm very much obliged to you. It was mighty decent of you to go up there and stay because you knew the women were alone, and nobody could have guessed that such complications would turn up."

"Of course Janet told me the story with reservations. Women usually reserve the best parts of a story, I find; but I gather that you had made yourself obnoxious by being in the right about something or other and having better manners than she had. That wasn't the way she put it, but that's the way I read it. Now I know Ginty. She's no end of a good fellow, but she has a temper like a buzz-saw and her pride's the very deuce. I dare say she was nasty to you when she wasn't an angel to you. That's her way; but she's angel a good deal of the time when you get to know her. She's boiling mad now about your having come off without her august permission."

"But she told me last night that she didn't know what to do about me—and the cows. In fact, she cried about it."

"The deuce she did! Well, that doesn't make any difference. Proving to a woman that she brought a thing on herself is the one thing she can't forgive. She's hot and haughty and she snubbed me good and plenty when I told her my sympathies were with you. Don't mind her, Townsend. She's had rather a rough experience and she's nervous and tired. I'm mightily obliged to you for all you've

done and tried to do, and I'm downright distressed about that leg. Are you any relation to Townsend of Townsend & Kramer?"

"I *am* Townsend of Townsend & Kramer."

"Really! Then you're an old friend of John Williams. I've just been staying with him. You people won out in great shape on that Gas Company case, didn't you?"

The talk drifted to business and no more was said of bullet wounds and bad-tempered maidens until Billy rose to go.

"So long, Townsend. Call on me if I can be of any use. I'll drop in again. I hope Janet will cool down to ordinary sanity and we'll see you over at the house before we go. I'm going to stay a little while and lick things into shape. Silly thing for a woman to try running a farm. No male things from a farm-hand to a rooster will take orders from a woman—nothing but a husband or a brother, that is. Good-bye."

He carried home a glowing account of Townsend's good qualities, dwelt upon John Williams's devotion to him, upon the reputation and fortune he had won in the legal world. Janet turned a deaf ear and remained serenely oblivious to Mr. Henry Townsend's existence.

Billy, as good as his word, called on Townsend again, but embarrassment induced by his sister's attitude caused him to make the visit brief, and as the injured man seemed quite out of danger he did not go a third time.

Only Jimmy went back and forth between the two houses distributing gossip and information liberally at both ends of the line. Janet knew that Mr. Townsend was up and sitting out under the trees. The doctor had ridden over to see him and forbidden him to use his leg, but a pair of crutches had been ordered from town and made the progress from bedroom to hammock possible.

The news filtered through Maria to her mistress, for to Jimmy Miss Holland did not mention the boarder's name.

Townsend for his part openly and shamelessly pumped the boy concerning things at the other farm. It was a comfort to hear of her even when the things he heard held a sting. Evidently Morton was making determined running. He and Miss Holland walked together, rode together, sang together, dug in the garden together, read together, loafed together, while Billy put a new farmer through his initiation at a pace conducive to vertigo.

An attractive man and a charming maid together day after day in the good June world among the Berkshire hills! There was only one ending for the story, Townsend told himself. Probably they were already engaged. If they weren't they would be. Each fresh budget of information brought by Jimmy deepened the conviction and yet he listened eagerly to the things it made him unhappy to hear.

"Miss Janet and Mr. Morton went up to Crystal Spring this afternoon," Jimmy said one day, sure of his hearer's interest and never dreaming of the heart havoc he was working. "They took the tea-basket and Mr. Billy's going up after the butcher's come for the calves. Miss Janet went off because she can't stand seeing calves took away—and veal so high now, too. Women are crazy things. What'd you do with a calf, anyway! She had on a pink dress and she certainly did look pretty as a peach. You never seen her in a pink dress, did you? No? Well, that's a pity. I like pink. Kit Prentiss wears pink a lot. Say, Mr. Townsend, if a girl told you you dasn't kiss her and then didn't move away a bit, what'd you do?"

"I'd kiss her," said Townsend promptly.

"That's what I did. She's mad."

"No, she isn't."

"Think not? Well, maybe."

The two sat silent for a while, looking off to the blue hills.

"I guess it was the pink dress," said Jimmy at last. "There's something about pink. I'd never thought of doin' it before. She ain't so awful pretty, but that pink made her kind of

June. Say, you'd really ought to see Miss Janet in a pink dress."

"Shut up, Jim," said the man curtly. He had had a vision of a woodland glen and a bubbling spring and a glamour of sunshine and shade and a girl in a pink dress looking uncommonly "June," and—Morton.

Jimmy looked at him in pained surprise and the man relented.

"I didn't mean anything, old fellow. If Kit Prentiss wears pink in June she must expect to be kissed. I don't blame you." But his smile wasn't exactly a merry one.

It was a day or two after the tea-party at Crystal Spring that Miss Holland, in search of ferns for the table, wandered up into the border of the woods and found Jimmy sitting with his back against a great pine-tree, his face turned toward the valley, which rolled away before him and his hands quite idle.

Gentle meditation was not the boy's accustomed rôle, and the girl dropped down on the pine needles beside him with a wondering look at his thin, freckled face.

He made room for her without formal greeting and both sat staring dreamily off over the sunlit world.

"Lovely, isn't it, boy!" said Janet, with a little sigh.

"Yep."

"A penny for your thoughts, Jimmy."

"Oh, I was just thinkin'."

There was another silence, broken at last by the boy.

"Say, Miss Janet, how does it feel to be in love?"

Janet turned to look at him. His face was soberly questioning and she did not laugh.

"Well, I should say it felt sort of all-overish, Jimmy."

He nodded. "Yes, I expect so. 'Most everything gets it in June, I guess."

"'Most everything," assented the girl thoughtfully.

"Does it make 'em happy?" asked Jimmy.

She hesitated. "Sometimes, boy."

"Not always?"

"No, not always."

"Do they get over it?"

"Sometimes," she repeated.

"Often?"

"Often."

"Then it ain't very serious?" There was a certain relief in Jimmy's tone. "Makes you feel like a darned fool though, don't it?" he said after a while.

"Yes, it does. Who is she, Jimmy?"

"Oh—a girl. She wears a pink dress. Say, I haven't told you about our new boarder. She's a bird."

Miss Holland's languor vanished. "Who is she?" she asked.

"Oh, a girl from town. She wrote last week and ma told her to come on. She knows Mr. Townsend and I'm awful glad she's come, on his account. It's pretty stupid for him, but now she'll be around and have nothing to do and he won't be lonesome."

"Did she know he was here?" Miss Holland inquired carelessly of the distant hills.

"I dunno. Maybe. Anyway, she seemed awful pleased to see him and he laughed a lot out on the porch last night."

"How old is she, Jimmy?" Miss Holland's voice had a wheedling tone. Jimmy was usually garrulous enough, but today his mind seemed to be upon things other than gossip.

"Oh, 'bout nineteen, I sh'd say."

"Is she pretty?"

"Sort of pretty—looks awful tired and pale. She's stylish all right enough—I never seen anybody stylisher—and she's real pleasant and nice. Speaking about pink dresses was what reminded me of her. She's got on a pink dress this morning—a pretty sort of a dress with white stuff around the neck, and short sleeves. She's got lovely white arms."

Janet glanced down at her own arms from which her blouse sleeves were rolled away. They were very brown, and she rolled her sleeves down and buttoned the cuffs.

"What's she doing this morning?" she asked.

"Oh, she's doin' some kind of fancy-

work out by the hammock and talking to Mr. Townsend. Say, he says that if a girl wears a pink dress in June she ought to expect to be kissed and needn't get mad about it."

"Oh, indeed!" said Miss Holland crisply. "Good-bye, Jimmy."

It was only after she reached the house that she remembered she had gone out after ferns.

## VII

THERE was no denying that Townsend found Miss Maymie Wilson amusing. She was a type of whose social qualities he had hitherto known nothing and types were always interesting to him. In his usual milieu she would never have held his attention for a moment. He was fastidious—over-fastidious—in regard to women. But when his friend Remley's stenographer walked into the Franklin dining-room and blushed, half in embarrassment, half in pleasure, at the encounter, he rose with outstretched hand and cordial greeting.

She was a pretty girl after her fashion—a fashion that spoke of overheated offices and ill-ventilated flats. Her thin face was pale. There were purplish shadows under her great dark eyes and lines of fatigue around her full-lipped mouth. Not a refined face, Townsend thought as he looked critically at her across the dinner-table. The lines were slurred into an indefinable lack of distinction. There was a common quality in the face that echoed the suggestion of the "y" in her name and the abnormally large and fluffy pompadour and the quality of the lace lavishly applied to the cheap blouse; but it was a kindly face, too, with a shrewdness underlying the kindness and there were potentialities of feeling lurking in the mouth and eyes.

"The sort of girl who never has a chance," he summed up, and a sense of resentment at the unfairness of things in general and of women's lives in particular gave his manner toward the girl an added tinge of chivalrous gen-

tleness and consideration. She had broken down at her work. Her employers had given her two weeks' vacation and a distant relative of Mrs. Franklin's had told her of the farm. She must get well—quite well—in two weeks, for she couldn't afford to lose her position. It was a good one and her mother wasn't working now and there were the kid brothers. They weren't old enough to work yet. She told Townsend about herself quite simply and frankly that first night on the veranda, recognizing him as outside her world but friendly, and he set himself the task of cheering her up a bit—with the result that he cheered up surprisingly himself. The girl had seen men and things and had a quick native wit, and Townsend found himself laughing at her as he had not laughed since Cupid and Miss Holland used him for a target. Small wonder that Jimmy was impressed by the merriment and carried the tale of it abroad.

If Jimmy realized that his opportunities for conversation were multiplied after that one talk beneath the pines, he did not attempt to account for it. The ways of womenfolk were past finding out and no sensible male being would waste energy in trying to find reasons for them. On the whole it wasn't unpleasant to talk to the young woman and he was rather lonely now that Mr. Townsend was not available as companion on country roamings. As a matter of fact, Mr. Townsend was not as much of a comfort to him even at home as he had been. That Miss Wilson was always around and she and Mr. Townsend seemed to have such a lot of uninteresting things to talk about that the rational and vital topics of conversation to which the boy and man had once devoted considerable time seemed to be crowded out.

Jimmy mentioned this unsatisfactory condition of things to Miss Holland one day, but she did not seem so sympathetic as she was curious.

"What do they talk about?" she asked.

Jimmy grunted disdainfully.

"Oh, I don't know. Sometimes it's

about women and sometimes it's about men, and generally it's about themselves." Which was quite true, as it is always true where a man and a woman talk long together, but possibly Miss Holland argued from the premise more than it justified.

As for Miss Maymie Wilson, she formulated no premises and she struggled with no arguments, but she was having a very happy vacation and was content with the consciousness of that. Perhaps she was not content. There's a difference between being content with things and accepting them. The girl was intelligent enough to make no mistake about Townsend's attitude toward her. Stenographers—even stenographers of her type—had married men of wealth and position. She knew that. Such traditions were treasured among the annals of the profession, but this was different. Townsend wasn't that sort of man. He wouldn't care about the money or the family; he simply wouldn't fall in love with a girl of her kind. Between his ideals and hers there was a great gulf fixed, and, if she rebelled vaguely against the world scheme that fixed the gulf, she entertained no foolish ideas concerning bridges. She was a sensible little girl, this Maymie Wilson, and she had known a number of men in her day—though none just like this big, kindly, gentle fellow with the ready courtesy and quick sympathy for all women, but with the heart for a woman of his own kind.

The day came when the wounded leg was once more in commission and Townsend began walking again, to the knoll behind the orchard at first, then on to the woods and finally wherever he would in the glorious June world. Miss Wilson laid aside her fancy work and went with him. Her face was losing its pallor, the shadows had gone from beneath her eyes and a something had come into the big dark eyes themselves—a something that hinted at light-hearted youth and happiness, though the lines about her mouth still wrote their contradictory testimony.

"If it were not for her mouth she would actually be beautiful," Towns-



end said to himself with distinct surprise.

Billy Holland, who met the two one morning on the river road, was less critical.

"Deuced pretty girl out walking with Townsend this morning," he announced cheerfully at the luncheon-table.

His sister poured him a cup of tea with more than ordinary calmness and deliberation.

"Yes, she's staying at the Franklins'," she said. "There's an extra lump in the saucer."

Billy's mouth stretched to an appreciative grin.

"Oh, I say—lucky dog, Townsend." Miss Holland turned to Morton with a remark about mountain laurel. She was not interested in Mr. Townsend's fortunes.

And Mr. Townsend was not particularly interested in his own fortunes. The country had lost its charm and he found himself thinking with a certain restless desire of the office grind which his soul had loathed only six weeks earlier. The doctor had ordered him to the country for two months.

"No Summer resort, my boy! Pure, unadulterated rusticity for you. Back to the soil and all that sort of thing. When you get restless go out and dig in the earth."

Lying under an apple-tree in a hill-side meadow, Townsend reflected that it was about time for him to go out and dig. He was restless, discontented, bored. All of which was not complimentary to his companion.

She sat with her back against the tree, her hands folded idly in her lap and her eyes following the circling flight of a hawk tacking, strong-winged, in a sea of measureless blue. A bumblebee boomed drowsily among the clover heads at her side and she lifted one of the listless hands to drive it away.

"It sounds like the hum of the street coming up through the windows of the office," she explained when Townsend smiled at her petulant movement. "We are up so high that even when the windows are open in Summer the city

only hums in our ears, but it's a hot, maddening sort of a sound when you're tired and miserable. Maybe it wouldn't be so bad if you knew it was bees, but when you know that it's people—swarms and swarms of them elbowing and jostling and crowding and sweating and hating things—it sort of gets on your nerves. That bee made me think of it and I don't want to think about it till I have to. There's all day today and a little part of tomorrow here—and then it's time enough to wake up."

"You've had a good vacation, haven't you?" Townsend asked, with a sympathetic friendliness that a girl less clear-sighted might have misread. Maymie Wilson understood. Of course he was sorry for her. That was the kind of man he was; but as for caring—she looked at him with speculation in her eyes.

"It's queer you haven't married, Mr. Townsend," she said in a serious, wondering fashion that robbed the remark of all intrusiveness.

"You'd make a woman awfully happy, you know."

The man looked up at her laughingly. "You think I would?"

"Oh, yes, you would—if you loved her."

"But if she didn't love me?"

The girl looked surprised.

"Oh, I guess she'd love you all right enough if you cared about her."

There was self-revelation in the simple remark if the man had chosen to read between the lines, but vanity was not one of his failings and his thoughts were far away from Miss Maymie Wilson.

"As a matter of fact, she detests me cordially," he said, hardly conscious of all he was admitting.

A queer little spasm flickered over the girl's face and was gone.

"Perhaps she don't know you do care about her."

Townsend was pulling grass blades with earnest deliberation. He gave the suggestion his consideration.

"No, perhaps she doesn't," he admitted.

"Why don't you tell her?"

His lips twisted into an unmirthful little smile.

"I never got far enough along for that."

"If I were a man, I'd begin with that and do the other things afterward."

Townsend sat up and looked at Miss Wilson.

"That's an excellent idea," he said gravely, "but it's too late for me to make use of it. I started wrong."

"Well, can't you start over again?"

"I'm afraid not. I never see her."

"Why not?"

"She doesn't want to see me."

"That's a silly reason," said Miss Wilson quite simply.

Townsend knitted his brows.

"Perhaps it is, now that you mention it; but she made the point very clear, and a fellow has some pride."

"Oh, pride!" The girl made a little gesture as of one who washes her hands of a hopeless proposition.

"You folks think a good deal of pride, don't you?" she added after a pause. "I suppose it's dead common to care more about anybody you love than about your pride."

Her accent implied that she resigned herself to being dead common, and Townsend felt with a vague sense of resentment that he had been tried in the balance as a lover, by primitive standards, and had been found wanting.

"Well, after all, in this age and country one doesn't knock the object of his adoration on the head with a stuffed club and then worry her out of hand," he said with a hint of temper in his tone.

"No, I suppose not." A casual hearer might have gained the impression that Miss Wilson considered her country and age effete.

"Is she pretty?" she asked suddenly.

"Pretty!" Townsend drew in his breath sharply.

"What does she look like?"

There was a wistful curiosity in the voice, a desire to hear and a shrinking from the hearing; but the man was deaf to everything save the beating of his own heart. It would be a comfort

to talk about the One Woman to this friendly girl, and the two would never meet. He yielded to temptation.

"She looks like— Oh, there's nothing she looks like," he said, talking to the Summer world around him rather than to the girl at his side. He had rolled over on his back and was staring straight up into the blue. The girl was glad of that.

"All of the beautiful things have part in her," he went on dreamily. "There's sunshine in her hair—brown hair, you know, with nippy shadows in it and flecks of gold in the high lights—and her eyes are like pools when the sky is blue-gray overhead. Sometimes I thought they were very dark blue, and then again I could have sworn that they were brown; but they are gray. Queer coloring with her golden-brown hair, but it's lovely. One's always surprised when she lifts her lashes. There's simply no getting used to it. Her cheeks and lips are red, but there's a soft brown over the red of the cheeks and all of her face is browned a little. It's no pink-and-white doll face. She has the prettiest, stubbornest little chin in the world. There's a dimple in it even when it is most stubborn and her mouth—well, there simply isn't any way of telling about her mouth. It's tempting Providence and man to have a mouth like that."

"Is she tall?"

"N-no—not inconveniently tall—just about tall enough to tuck her head down comfortably on a coat lapel—and slim, slim and straight as one of the birch-trees yonder, but not thin—all gracious curves and beautiful lines."

"She must be lovely."

"She is."

Townsend's flush of enthusiasm deepened to one of embarrassment.

"You must think I'm an idiot, Miss Wilson—raving like a freshman in his first heart throes. You see I've kept it all bottled up, and when you pulled the cork out——"

"Funny how people always apologize for saying anything they really

think or feel," said the girl. Her voice and her eyes were tired.

"I guess we'd better go down to the house. I'd like to lie down for a while before dinner."

"Don't you feel well?" the man asked solicitously but still with the far-away look in his eyes.

"Oh, yes, I'm well. I've got to be well."

Miss Wilson's chin had a stubbornness of its own.

### VIII

JANET HOLLAND had gone for an early morning walk. The house at breakfast-time had shown indications of being too small for Billy and herself, and she didn't intend to be lectured by a boy only two years older than she. Of course Billy did think a lot of Bob Morton—well, so did she, for that matter. She was really awfully fond of Bob, but one couldn't marry every man one was fond of, and as for having flirted with Bob—that was silly, positively silly. What could one do with a man when one was penned up on a farm with him and no other man within sight except one's brother? Spending all one's spare time with a man on a farm where he was the only man didn't mean half as much as spending fifteen minutes with him in a conservatory while hordes of other men were hunting for one. Billy had brought Bob to the farm; well, she had sent him away. That was all there was to it. She wasn't in a humor for continuous-performance love-making.

She wasn't really in a humor for anything. The morning walk hadn't helped at all, though it had led through a wonderful fresh-washed world, all gold and green and blue and brown and sweet with scent of meadow clover and woodland pines. There was a little wrinkle between her brows as she came along the path through the ravine. She was thinking that perhaps, after all, she didn't like the country. Probably no one would want to buy the farm, though. Maybe Billy would

take it off her hands. He seemed so tremendously pleased with it. Then she could go away; but when she tried to make up her mind where she'd go she couldn't decide. All the other places seemed lonesome, too.

"Oh, I beg your pardon," she gasped, as she turned a corner sharply and almost fell over a girl who was sitting on a boulder beside the tumbling brook. The girl looked up indifferently. She had been crying. That was readily seen, but the storm had passed, leaving the dark eyes dry and heavy and sad. Something flamed up in them at the sight of Janet and the girl rose quickly, with a certain defiance which faded from face and bearing as swiftly as it had come.

"You must be the girl," she said breathlessly, and with the words surface amenities were left far behind. The laughing apologies died on Janet's lips.

"What girl?" she asked, with a puzzled frown.

"The girl he loves so."

A vivid blush swept Janet's face and for a second the long lashes dropped over the gray eyes. When they lifted again the girl watching her remembered what Townsend had said. Yes; the gray eyes were a surprise. One would never get quite used to them.

"You're as pretty as he said you were. I didn't suppose you could be."

The amazing frankness of the girl, the utter simplicity of her, were disarming. Janet clutched at indignation. It eluded her. Even haughty dignity slipped through her fingers. She opened her mouth to say that she had no idea what the young woman was talking about, and the untruth died on her lips. Instinctively she knew that this girl with the unhappy eyes and the common mouth was Mrs. Franklin's other boarder and that for her "He" had but one meaning.

So this was Miss Wilson! Janet's glance took in the aggressive pompadour, the cheap, overtrimmed blouse, the jeweled belt-buckle, the high-heeled shoes—and went back to the great dark eyes with the hurt in them.

One couldn't be angry with a girl whose eyes were like those. They were so frank and unveiled, so eloquently miserable. They were reproachful, too, accusing, and suddenly the lips voiced the reproach in the eyes.

"What makes you treat him like that?"

"Like what?" And now it was too late to go back to the beginning and profess a comprehensive ignorance concerning the third person, singular, masculine.

"Oh, you know—the way that makes him unhappy. Ain't you in love with him?"

It was an impertinent question. Of course it was. Janet realized that she should resent it, but, oddly enough, she didn't. On the contrary, she felt a queer conviction that she owed frankness to this outspoken girl who looked at her so steadily and challenged her so bluntly; felt that she must set conventions and evasions aside and answer her honestly, as woman to woman. But when she tried to frame the answer a great surprise flooded her eyes, a shaded sweetness crept to her lips.

Was she in love with him?

Old habit hurried to her rescue.

"Certainly not," she said firmly to herself. "In love with the man? Absurd!" and then her long lashes rose, her gray eyes met the waiting look of the darker eyes; and, half against her will, her lips were saying:

"Yes; I am."

For a moment there was silence there in the heart of the woods, while the women looked at each other from two worlds which held one thing in common.

At last Miss Wilson smiled—a smile that was a passing comment on life's little worries.

"So am I," she said quietly.

The blood surged into Janet Holland's face, but her anger was against the man, not against the girl.

"He had no right—" she began hotly, but the other girl stopped her.

"Oh, no. Don't you know him better than that?" she said, with a touch of impatience. "He isn't that sort.

He's been kind to me. That's all. He's kind to Mrs. Franklin and Ida and Bingo. He can't help being kind; but as for anything else—why, it hasn't ever entered his head that such a thing would be possible with him and me. It ain't that he's so proud. Being poor, and working, and all that wouldn't make any difference to him. He'd love a working girl just as quick as anyone else if she was his kind of a girl, but I'm not his kind. No, it ain't that he's so proud. It's because he's always had an idea of the sort of girl he could fall in love with and there simply ain't any other sort in the world for him. He don't care about things some men think a lot about. He hasn't ever been giving away any of the things that belong to the girl. He's been keeping them all for her—and now you're the girl."

She stopped speaking and stood looking down at the water foaming among the rocks.

"What are you going to do about it?" she asked suddenly, facing Janet once more, with a sturdy challenge in her face and voice.

"I don't know."

Janet's voice trembled. She was sorry and happy—and frightened in this strange world of unreserve so far removed from all her training and traditions.

"Aren't you going to tell him?"

"I won't see him."

"Send for him."

"A girl can't do that sort of thing."

"Well, a woman can."

Janet shook her head stubbornly.

"One has to have a little pride."

"Pride!" The word was flung out on a flood of scorn. "You say you love him and I tell you he's crazy about you, and then you talk about pride. Thank God I'm not refined! You refined folks have got water in your veins, I guess. If I thought he loved me and I'd hurt him, d'you suppose I'd stay a mile away from him, being proud? Why, I'd follow him across the world to tell him I was sorry.

"You've been horrid to him—yes, you have. He didn't tell me so, but I know you have; for he said the girl

detested him, and something must have made him think that. Why were you mad at him? I know he never did anything to make you mad. What *did* he do?"

Janet tried to think of the unpardonable things he had done. He had done the milking for her, and he had come and watched outside the house, because he was afraid something would happen to her, and he had gone away before he was well—because he thought it worried her to have him in the house—but, telling these offenses over to herself, she realized that no one of them would seem unpardonable to the other girl.

"He didn't do anything—much," she admitted.

"I thought so, but you were horrid, just the same, and you haven't got nerve enough to send for him and tell him you're sorry. That's all you'd need to do. The rest of it would come along fast enough. I should think that pride of yours would stand that much of a jar—but if you ain't big enough—"

"It must be time for me to start. I'm going away this afternoon. Good-bye."

She darted down the path, but at the turn of the way she paused for a moment.

"Don't be a miserable little fool, girl," she called back across her shoulder. "It don't come to all of us."

Half an hour later, from the hammock, Janet saw the Franklin buckboard go down the road toward the station. A trunk was strapped on behind and on the seat were Mr. Franklin and a girl in a picture hat of abnormal size.

When the wagon disappeared around the bend in the road Miss Holland rose from the hammock with an air of sudden determination and hurried into the house. A few moments later she reappeared on the veranda.

"Jimmy!" she called. "Oh, Jimmy!" Jimmy came out of the barn and strolled toward the house in response to a beckoning hand.

"Jimmy," said Miss Holland, her head held very high and a fine carelessness in her tone, "I wish you'd

take this note to Mr. Townsend right away."

"To Mr. Townsend, ma'am?" echoed the boy unbelievably.

"Yes."

"Any answer?"

She hesitated.

"N-no. You needn't wait for one."

"Blushin' like the dickens," commented Jimmy to himself as he turned toward home. "Now what's up?"

He found Townsend reading in the hammock and dexterously shied the note at him from afar.

"Somethin' Miss Holland sent you," he announced, with an expansive grin.

"What!"

The explosive monosyllable expressed utter disbelief.

"That's the way I felt about it," said Jimmy, "but you can see for yourself."

The man tore open the envelope and read. Disbelief gave way to amazement in his face, and amazement melted into joy. Jimmy watched the transformation scene with a mighty curiosity; but Townsend had forgotten all about him and sat staring at the note. He was evidently bewildered—but happy. Even Jimmy could see that.

Still with the puzzled frown and the shining eyes Townsend folded the note, put it carefully in his waistcoat pocket and hurried into the house.

"Hang the girls, anyhow!" growled Jimmy. "First they're mad as hops and then they go writin' you letters."

He sat down on the side stoop, pulled a much soiled envelope out of his pocket, took from it a crumpled sheet of paper and read what was written on it, smiling sheepishly as he read.

Townsend came out of the house, brushed past the boy without a word and followed with hasty, swinging stride the path toward the woods. Jimmy looked after him meditatively for a few moments, then shook his head as though giving up a problem too deep for him.

"Darned funny we're all like that," he said as he put his letter away.

"I guess I might as well go and find out what she wants."

He went through the meadow and down to the river-side; but all roads lead to Love's land when hearts are young and June is in the blood.

There was no one at the Spring when Townsend reached there, but he had not dreamed of finding her waiting for him.

"At five o'clock," she had written. It was only a quarter to five now, but it would be easier to wait there than at the house. He could watch the path and feel that at any moment she might come up through the green gloom to meet him. Would her eyes be kind or angry? He knew the angry look best; but surely she would not have sent for him if she had not meant to be kind. It could not be that she was in trouble and needed help. With Billy close at hand she would never have turned to him. There was something she wanted to say to him. That was what she had written. Well, no matter what that something might be, he would be face to face with her again; he would look into her eyes and hear her dear voice. Perhaps he would touch her hand.

"Then let come what may,  
I shall have had my day,"

he quoted softly and laughed at himself the next moment for a love-sick fool.

"When an able-bodied man moons on a brook's edge and quotes Tennyson it's high time he was going to work," he thought contemptuously, "or getting married," prompted a vagrant fancy born of heart-throbs and June weather. The audacity of the idea made the man's brain dizzy. From a look, a word and a touch to marrying—'twere a far cry for any save a June fancy; but a fancy may grow to a dream and Townsend was dreaming a wonderful dream when she came to him through the pines, with eyes that hinted of flight and a mouth that flouted the eyes for cowardice.

She was walking very slowly and when she saw Townsend waiting for her she stopped and wavered for a

moment as though taking counsel of her eyes and poised for flight. Then she moved forward more slowly than ever. The man went to meet her and the gladness in his face was a thing good to see, but he waited for her to speak. She was not angry—but would she be kind?

The girl held out her hand to him shyly. It occurred to him that she looked very young and for some reason or other a trifle frightened.

"You didn't come to see me," she said, with the instinctive feminine desire to put the man in the wrong.

"Would I have been welcome?" Townsend asked. His tone was compact of doubt and his eyes questioned hers half-smilingly, half-gravely. He was willing to be serious or gay as his lady chose, but he did not understand. She had never been like this—so girlish shy, so wistful sweet.

She shook her head.

"No—not at first. I was dreadfully angry. It *was* sneaky to go off that way. You know it was."

He admitted that it was. He was in a mood to admit anything provided she accused him of it in such a voice as that, such a soft, friendly, appealing little voice that made of "sneaky" a flattering term.

"But I wasn't nice about it," she went on hastily. "I know I wasn't. I'd been horrid before and I was just horrid again."

"Oh, no—no, you weren't," protested the man; but she had taken her courage in both hands and her pride was under her feet.

"If you ain't big enough!" The scornful words rang in her ears. They had been ringing in her ears for two hours. But she *was* big enough. She had sent for him and she was going to tell him she was sorry. A little dust and ashes more or less on her repentant head didn't amount to much.

"I was a wretched little beast," she said, waxing actually enthusiastic in self-accusation. "I might have known you did it because you thought it would be better for me. I *did* know it down in my heart, but it's my ugly



disposition. I've got a perfectly frightful disposition."

She looked so little and sweet and so discouraged about herself that Townsend felt a sudden mad impulse to put his arms around her and tell her that he liked pepper with his dispositions, but through heroic effort he refrained.

"You mustn't bother about it all," he said gently. "I suppose I was rude, though I didn't mean to be. I was only thinking of your comfort, and I knew you were too generous and hospitable to let me go even though I was making things uncomfortable for you. It was natural enough that you should be angry. You've no reason to blame yourself."

But she insisted upon blaming herself, and she did it with fervor. Groveling wasn't so very hard when one had made a good start.

"It was disgraceful to let you go and never send a message or inquire or go to see you, when I'd shot you myself and you'd been nice to me all the way through—except about the fish. You were positively insufferable about the fish."

"I was," he assented earnestly, but with a prodigious cheerfulness. This world was turning topsy-turvy and he liked it that way. All things are possible in a topsy-turvy world. Even dreams may come true.

Janet had dropped down upon a big flat stone beside the brook. It was a stone that would hold two if urged, and Townsend demonstrated that fact.

"We won't talk about the misunderstandings any more," he said. His

face and his voice implied that he could suggest topics for conversation more profitable, themes upon which he could readily wax eloquent; but Janet had not finished her penance.

"I haven't said that I was sorry. That's why I sent for you. I wanted to tell you that I was sorry."

It was out. She had done all she could. Even the Other Girl had said that was all she would need to do. Her cheeks were hot, her eyes, turned steadfastly away from the man at her side, were misty. It would be dreadful to cry, but if he didn't say something within a moment she would surely do it. She couldn't stand the silence. She'd much rather he would say something unpleasant.

And then the man, without breaking the silence, leaned forward and looked fairly into her face—looked questioningly, searchingly, eagerly, until the long lashes lifted and the gray eyes met his. It was only for an instant. The curtains dropped again swiftly—but he had seen all that life has to offer a man of blessedness, and he drew a quick, sharp breath that was almost a sob.

"Little girl!" he said hoarsely, "little girl!"

His arms went round her and his lips found hers.

An hour later the two went homeward through the sunset glow.

"When we are married you must always have a dress like that," said the man authoritatively.

The girl blushed guiltily as she looked down at the admired frock.

It was pink!



## REASON ENOUGH

"I AM not worth a tear," he sighed—  
His tone was low and deep.  
"I know you're not," the maid replied,  
"And that's just why I weep!"

# THE WONDERFUL LADY

By Henry Sydnor Harrison

WHEN Gobin Godolphin was four years old he drew his nurse's portrait in colored crayon on the bathroom wall, which was white and therefore offered an appropriate background for portraiture; and his uncle, scrutinizing the sketch a morning or two later as he gestured muscularly over his pulley-weights, cried, not without bitterness: "Thank God, he will never be a painter, anyway!"

Gobin's uncle was himself a painter. As a critic he was even more obviously a failure; for Gobin had not yet reached his tenth year when, of a Winter's afternoon, he cartooned his teacher, Mr. Pendenning, on the school blackboard, while feigning to be engrossed at his short division. Amid the titters of the excited room Mr. Pendenning, of course, turned suddenly, as teachers always will, perceived his own features in astonishing caricature, started at the uncanniness of the thing, flushed at the likeness of it, and invited grave little Gobin to accompany him to the private office.

Mr. Pendenning's artist friend, Crompton, who chanced to call a couple of hours later, cut out that square of blackboard with a sharp jack-knife and bore it amazedly away, having calmly signed for the horrified Pendenning a cheque of sufficient size to buy a new board three times over. Crompton likes to make the boast now that he has the earliest specimen of Godolphin's work extant. It hangs to this day on his studio wall, beautifully framed, with a section of Gobin's short division, glaringly incorrect,

still colliding with and overlapping the Pendenning ear.

No other samples of Gobin's blackboard work have come down to us, because after that day he sketched upon blackboards no more. At his later schools he commonly worked on large sheets of yellow arithmetic paper, behind the breastwork of an upraised geography cover. Sooner or later they caught him at it, however, and that was why in later days it was almost impossible to name a school of any note which Gobin had not at one time or another patronized. At nineteen he left his last one, suddenly but voluntarily; that was when, dropping in for the opening of the greatest annual exhibition in America, he saw his long since famous oil, "Truth," hung upon the line. His next school was an art one, but even the master admitted that there was nothing for him to learn there.

At twenty-three he painted Mrs. Ormond Ormond-Brown, who, gazing happily at the canvas, saw that her limned countenance was beautiful, and was, as always, a little obtuse about expression. Brown himself was clever; he looked at the portrait, looked again at the eyes, saw what he saw and walked off without a word; and the separation came in three months. Many said that Gobin would marry her, but they were never the ones who knew Gobin the best. At any rate his name, after that, became known wherever there were artists, or for that matter, gossips, gathered together. At the Curzon Club we always said that if he had had less money he could

not have avoided becoming the first painter in the world. But he had a great deal of money and simply would not work.

At thirty-six he sat one warm afternoon of early Summer upon the peak of Mount Jenny, in the Blue Ridge, his legs, as it were, hanging down the side, his immense and somewhat absurd sun helmet lying in easy reach beside him. The hotel was a long mile away as you walked, though a few hundred yards straight through the air would have brought you directly above it. Gobin rested upon a broad rock and bit away at a banana; and the declivity here was so abrupt that when he dropped the skin, which he did presently, it fell fifty feet before it hit anything. Having done this he selected another banana from the paper beside him and patiently resumed:

"Five hundred women seated side by side on a long bench, all horribly overdressed, still as a church, and each face set to prettiness like a plaster cast; it would be rather an odd sight, wouldn't it? Well, that is my life for ten years. A numbing life for a man of parts, is it not? With my delicate constitution, I am astonished that I have not died of it. They tell you that there are no two faces alike, but no artist ever believed that. In point of fact, I know all the faces that there are. It is a terrible thing to be thirty-six and know that there are no more faces. Sometimes I think I have invented a really new one, but of course I never have. It walks into my studio next morning, topping a so-so figure, and wheedles to be painted. Since I have sat here over my bananas a remarkably good one has unexpectedly come to me. I have never seen one at all like it. That, of course, proves nothing whatever. She is somewhere, very likely quite near. That is invariably my experience. Conceivably she sits in the hotel lobby at this moment, playing euchre, let us say, with two ladies and a dummy."

Dusting a place on the rock with the daintiest handkerchief imaginable he laid his half-eaten banana upon it with

a sigh as of one who goes to his duty, but reluctantly; and taking a little note-book from his pocket and a stub of a pencil he fell wearily to sketching.

Gobin was five-feet three at this time, grave, dyspeptic and a trifle wizened. He was known to his friends as the most conceited man in America, and accepted the diagnosis with his habitual apathy. For the most part men disliked him and even some women. Henry Johnsmith, who lay beside him on the rock reading the financial page of his New York newspaper, was his one close friend. Johnsmith entered Wall street at the age of twenty-two with seventeen dollars capital and a six-dollar-a-week berth in a broker's office, and had made a million before he was thirty; but Gobin ordered him around like a child.

"This is what I mean," said Gobin presently, in his most tired voice.

Johnsmith lowered his paper, and saw that Gobin was holding up a bit of paper for him to look at. He reached out for it, but finding that his friend had no intention of advancing it any nearer, much less of letting go of it, he must needs come to a sitting posture if he would see clearly. And having done that he sat and stared at it a long time without saying a word.

Gobin, however, holding the sketch in his left hand, picked up the half-eaten banana in his right and moodily munched away at it.

Gobin's art was the most marvelous fact in life to Henry Johnsmith, and the wonder of it had never so taken hold of him and shaken him as now. Here in ten strokes of a bad pencil he had made a face that spoke and struck into a man's soul; a young, calm face, half sheer beauty, half spirit, wonderful and sweet; a face—or so it seemed to Johnsmith—the most to be desired in the whole world. And as he looked, he thought less and less of the amazing skill that had created it, and more of the wonder and glory of that face. . . .

"Give her to me," he said after a while.

Gobin let fall his banana-peel and

leaning dangerously far over the cliff, noted with some interest that it fell precisely on top of its predecessor.

"Ask her, my boy. She is around here somewhere, you can depend absolutely upon that."

"She is mine, then. Give me the sketch, Gobin."

"I saw her first," said Gobin calmly.

"I claimed her first."

"I claim them all," said Gobin, and let the sketch flutter down the hillside. The wind took hold of it, wafted it over tree-tops and dropped it finally where the eye of man on the cliff could not follow. It rested, in point of fact, upon the cheek of a girl who lay on the pine-needles a hundred yards below and pleasantly dreamed her dreams.

Johnsmith regarded Gobin in a vexed sort of way, pulled his great mustache for a moment and then laughed. "You were ever the reckless one for airy persiflage, Gobin. That sketch, with a Godolphin on it in your curiously bad hand, would have run into money at the dealers'."

"Money!" echoed Gobin tiredly. "You will kill me some day with your odd jargon, Henry. Money! What will people be caring for next? But never mind that. Something in your manner leads me to infer that the face I drew a moment since rather appealed to you."

"I thought it," said Johnsmith in his usual matter-of-fact way, "the most wonderful face in the world."

"For once in your life, Johnsmith," replied Gobin, "you have criticized a picture correctly. There was never, I imagine, a more wonderful lady than that. Did you notice particularly her eyes? If I have one illusion still left me, I may say that it is eyes. I wish to marry like another man, my lad; it is only the women who have kept me a bachelor. But those eyes—I should not fear to trust them to the farthest. They would be impossible without every merit, every attraction, every nobility. And should I see them, especially when illuminating, as you rightly say, the most wonderful face

in the world, do you dream that I should hesitate an instant to walk across to the proprietress of them and beg her to begone to the parson with me?"

Johnsmith, a little uncertain how to take this, said nothing; and answering himself, "The reply," observed Gobin dully, "is in the negative." And taking his new concertina from its handsome pigskin case he fell to playing "The Blue Bells of Scotland," with a certain sadness and terribly out of tune.

Gobin, possibly, was the worst musician in America, but he had no idea of it. His complacency was boundless; he aspired to be musical and consequently, so far as he personally was concerned, was intensely so. Though he had never taken a lesson in his life he would play in every company where his open hints in that direction were not too conclusively rebuffed. He would tackle any instrument, whether he had seen it before or not, and was equally bad on all. No praise of his pictures could arouse the least emotion in him any longer; but if you spoke tolerantly of his music on these occasions he would almost certainly invite you to dine.

From "The Blue Bells" he passed, without pausing a moment, into "My Bonnie." At the fourth bar, which he was accomplishing with difficulty anyway, he was annoyed to have Henry Johnsmith interrupt him with:

"Here's a lady coming straight this way."

Gobin stopped with a sigh, exclaimed, "Head her off this instant!" and laboriously resumed.

Henry Johnsmith was Gobin's willing slave. He who had made Wall street tremble in his time and given the world's richest man a very bad quarter of an hour, rose at Godolphin's bidding like a well-trained lackey. He stepped to the edge of the rock on the path-side and made foridding gyrations with his great arms.

"Private grounds!" he cried to the approaching lady, and then: "Go away! Go away!"

## II

It developed, however, that she was not that kind of lady. Pretending to mistake Johnsmith's arm-work for gestures of friendly salutation she waved back to him very gaily, and scrambling on nimbly up the rough hillside, did not pause till only a matter of five feet lay between her and the frowning Johnsmith. She was a small lady in white and, it was to be noted, of exquisite figure; but as for her face, the thick veil that enveloped her big white hat quite hid it from view.

Gobin, intensely irritated, plodded on with his selection, now playing it extraordinarily loud, as though to indicate to the Lady that though she had, indeed, joined them in a physical sense, she was to reckon herself in no way a member of the party.

"Did you not understand me, madam?" demanded Henry Johnsmith sternly. "He wishes to be alone."

"So it is *he*, then!" said the Lady, looking now at Gobin; and even he was struck with the quality of that voice. "I was rather hoping that it might be you. But that is the merest detail. The walk up the cliff has left me all out of breath; I shall sit here for a moment, if you wish it, and rest. The tall gentleman says that these grounds are private, but that, of course, is only his merry humor. Besides, no grounds are private where one can make oneself welcome. Every child knows that. The view here is magnificent, is it not?"

She began to unwind her heavy veil, which must have been uncomfortable on so warm a day; and speechless Johnsmith, to whom a strange thought had suddenly come, watched her with a certain intentness.

Gobin compressed his concertina to its smallest, thrust it back into its case, and snapped the catch with annoyed finality. "Madam," he said coldly, now glancing at her for the first time, "kindly state the nature of your errand or business."

"Wait," said the Lady, in a blurred

sort of voice, "till I get the pins out of my mouth."

The veil came off at that moment, and Henry Johnsmith was conscious of a small shock of disappointment. It was not the face that he had, in an odd flash, half thought that he might find there. It was as different a face as possible—a commonplace face, he thought, but for the eyes. Or was it the chin?—or the splendid hair? Johnsmith regarded it more closely and thought:

"Whatever its redeeming feature, it appears after all to be distinctly redeemed."

Gobin, who was gloomily looking over the tree-tops again, said to himself: "One thousand times has that face, or its absolute equivalent, been faithfully depicted by the undersigned."

The Lady then said: "Ten minutes ago I sat in the woods down there and dreamed dreams such as few, I dare say, have dreamed before me. Beautiful shadowy thoughts came to me thicker than hops, and I caught them and made them into poems. Just in my head, I mean. I should mention, perhaps, that I am a poet. I would tell you my name, except that I am perfectly sure that neither of you has ever heard of it. You do not, if you don't mind, look to me like reading gentlemen. Yet it is only three years since I had a sonnet in the *Axminster Review*. I have met several people who have heard of me, and remember that sonnet. But no more of this now. As I leaned back against a massive tree and thought out new sonnets far better than my old, all at once something fluttered down through the trees and rested on my cheek. It was this."

She held up Gobin's sketch, and the two men looked at it, Henry Johnsmith with a curious feeling of wonderment. Gobin, however, merely glanced at it a moment, with intense apathy, and turning his head wearily away, again said:

"I must insist, madam, that you explain without further delay the nature of your business or errand."

The Lady stamped her foot. The

operation directed Johnsmith's attention to it, and he realized, with some amazement, that he had never seen so tiny a one.

"Business or errand!" she cried. "Oh, is that foolishness necessary? Need you talk the patois of the very refined floorwalker? Need you make such a goose, goose, *goose* of yourself? Listen. This sketch comes blowing down to me, as it were, from heaven. I pick it up and am astonished—entranced. The most wonderful face—the most wonderfully drawn! I say to myself: 'A great artist is near me somewhere; a man of vast abilities, large sympathies, wonderful understanding; a poet in colors as I am a poet in words. I will go to him, and his wise heart will tell him that my coming like this is a tribute of sincerity such as Fortune gives to her dearest only.' Well, I rush off directly—and what a disappointment! Instead of a large, gentle, wonderful, understanding man who has taken all knowledge for his province—what do we find here? Why, a little bit of a dried-up monkey of a man with the conversation of an office-boy and the spirit of a peptonoid, who can do nothing but snap out despondent inquiries regarding the nature of my business or errand. It is too, too grotesque!"

She laughed very merrily, and leaning back against the ledge of smooth rock—for she had already seated herself—she opened the pretty portfolio which she had carried tucked under her arm, and made as if she would write.

Since the world began, perhaps, no gentleman was ever so weary, so apathetic and blasé, that he could hear a strange and not unpleasing lady refer to him as a dried-up monkey of a man, without simultaneously experiencing some desire to proceed with the conversation. For twenty years no one had spoken to Gobin except in terms of fulsome admiration, and he was conscious now of a certain sensation.

"Put up your portfolio, madam," he said, not unkindly; "I would talk with you a few moments."

But the Lady, very meditative, only

tapped a waiting pencil upon some remarkably white teeth and said nothing.

"Did you hear him, madam?" said Henry Johnsmith, in a manner somewhat less assured than the one his brokers were familiar with. "He says to put up the portfolio, please; he would like to talk with you a few minutes."

The Lady stamped her foot again; and this time it was Gobin who was struck by the extraordinary smallness of it.

"Merely," she cried, in a pretty passion, "because he sketches rather neatly must he be too dull to see that I am busy now?"

Henry Johnsmith stared.

"Down there in the dell just now," she went on to Johnsmith, "as I sat with my dreams, an idea for a poem came to me; a wonderful, wonderful idea—oh, the best, surely, that has come to a poet in years and years. As I hurried up the hill, hardly thinking of anything at all, *there* were the two opening lines suddenly in my head! Just these:

"'Because of flashes that are mine  
Of joy I know is half divine—'

"That is good, is it not? Then, since I have been sitting here, two more lines have come to me. That was what I was writing just now. When things come to you of course you must put them down directly, or they will slip away again—

"'Because I touch such happiness

As mind or body could not guess. . . .

"You see the thought I am working up to? It is beautiful, is it not? And there is flitting through my head at this moment the idea for four more lines—and such lines! But of course it is not possible to think of anything here, thanks to the sketching gentleman and his endless chatter. What is it that he wishes to talk with me about, do you know?"

"Madam," said Johnsmith in the respectful tone he always used when speaking of Gobin, "he will tell you in his own good time."

Gobin cleared his throat. "You thought," he then inquired, "favorably of the sketch I tossed off a few moments since?"



The Lady took it from her portfolio and looked at it long; and, as she did so, her manner appeared to lose something of its odd and charming gaiety.

"I think," she said presently, "that it is the most wonderful face that was ever drawn since the world began."

For the first time that year, perhaps, Gobin smiled.

"That," he explained, almost good-naturedly, "is the way I draw."

"But what struck me most, I think," she continued at once, "is the astonishing way in which you have caught the likeness."

"The likeness!" cried Johnsmith, startled.

And the Lady said to Gobin, "Can you always persuade them so quickly to sit for you?"

"Madam," said Gobin, gazing at her, "a strange delusion has seized you. I have never seen such a lady as that. The sketch that you hold in your hand is but a face o' dreams."

There was something in his tone, precise and dry as it was, that carried instant conviction.

"She came on the train with me this morning," said the Lady slowly. "I left her in the hotel an hour ago. I could not be mistaken, for I noticed her particularly. She was playing euchre with two ladies and a dummy."

Had he been told suddenly that each of his favorite securities had dropped fifty points while one watched, and beggared him utterly, Henry Johnsmith could not have looked one-tenth so stunned; and even Gobin could scarcely pretend that he was not surprised.

"We hold, madam," he said in a moment, with affected calmness, "that to wear that face is to possess all the virtues known among men. If such a lady lives, I am under the impression that we have sworn to marry her. Correct me, Henry, if I am wrong."

"On the contrary," said Henry Johnsmith dazedly, "you speak the words of truth and soberness."

"Both of you!" cried the Lady in astonishment. "Would the Church permit it?"

"One of us, at her pleasure. You perceive the idea? She shall wander among us as she will, choosing as her fancy dictates."

In high delight the Lady clapped her hands, and both men observed then that they were just such hands as one would hope to find with such a foot. "Oh, this is splendid, splendid! Men are never so delicious as when they talk of marrying someone. You don't mind my thinking you both delicious at this moment, do you? And now there is no time to lose, do you think? She may be here for just the shortest little while. You will let me help, will you not? I have not met her yet, but that, of course, will be the simplest thing in the world, and oh, how I shall adore introducing you! Shall we fly back to the hotel this very instant and meet her and—marry her?"

"Yes, yes," said Gobin indulgently; and Johnsmith echoed, "Yes, yes!"

"Then come, come!" cried the Lady, and they all three got up. "Faces surely are the truest indexes of character; it is glorious to meet men who know that so well! And if there is any difference at all, she is really more beautiful, not less, than the drawing. The sketching gentleman may carry my portfolio, if he promises that he will spill nothing out. And then each of you may take one of my hands, if you like, and so we shall steady each other down this rocky cliff. And now let us fly!"

Gobin took the Lady's portfolio in his right hand and her right hand in his left. And he perceived again, with grave pleasure, that she had a hand to be praised among many. Both his own hands being occupied in this way, it became obvious to the feeblest intellect that someone else must manage the concertina and the bag of bananas. Johnsmith, so far as Gobin was concerned, had a docile mind; he knew his place perfectly; and he picked up the concertina with a will. But the bananas—

"How," he asked tentatively, "about leaving the fruit behind?"

"By no means," replied Gobin, a

trifle surprised. "I shall wish one directly we reach the hotel."

"Ah, well," said Johnsmith, a little disappointedly. Hooking the little finger of his left hand through the strap of the concertina-case, he wrapped the remaining four about the neck of the paper bag, and held out his great right toward the Lady. Into it she slipped her other one, and Johnsmith thought, for the second time in those ten minutes, that he had never taken note of a hand at once so small and so engaging.

Half a mile down the hill the Lady checked her bright prattle with an exclamation, stopped short and said:

"Oh, they have come to me—quite suddenly as we talked! Poetry is the oddest thing, is it not? I am speaking of those other four lines, of course, and I must put them down this instant. Give me my portfolio at once, please. It will take just the merest second. You won't mind my stopping a second just for that?"

"No, no," said Gobin indulgently.

"Certainly not," said Henry Johnsmith.

The Lady sat upon a bed of turf and rested her back against a giant oak; and Gobin and Johnsmith stood and regarded her. And while they so stood and stared, "It occurs to me now," said Gobin to himself, "on second thought, that in all my life I have seen no face that was quite like this one."

The Lady wrote into her portfolio, she frowned, she scratched out, she wrote again. The lines, it seemed, had not come to her wholly perfect: it took longer than a second to straighten them out. In five minutes, however, she sprang up, and her smile was quite radiant.

"You have not forgotten," she cried joyously, "how the opening lines ran?"

"No, no," said Gobin still more indulgently.

"Certainly not," said Henry Johnsmith.

"Then listen, listen to my new ones," and she read softly in her beautiful voice:

"'Because of moments of such pain  
As thought or act could not explain—'

"That is the third 'because' couplet, you remember: and then—

"'I know whatever else may be,  
There is a godlikeness in me. . . .'

"That is my first verse already done. Tell me, do you think my poem is to be very, very good?"

"The lines," said Gobin, "jingle nicely."

For the first time in his life Henry Johnsmith was conscious of feeling irritated with Gobin.

"Madam," he said firmly, "it is to be a beautiful poem."

"Do you think so? You don't mind my saying that I do, too, do you? I am not really vain about my poems, yet I must say that. But no publisher will take it. Mark my words, both of you. Wherever I send it, it will come back and come back and come back! Why is that, do you know? But we must not stop here chattering of *Me* another minute. Let us fly."

So joining hands again they flew on down the hill. But at the hotel, where they arrived in due season, the wonderful face of Gobin's sketch was nowhere to be seen, though they beat the halls and grounds for it for the better part of an hour.

### III

NEXT morning at ten the Lady sat beneath a mimosa-tree in a far nook of the lawn, and wrote and rewrote in her portfolio. At half-past ten hove upon her horizon the form of Henry Johnsmith, who having watched her going from the hotel veranda had required that length of time to detach himself from Gobin.

"A surprise," he affirmed awkwardly, "to find you here."

"As pleasant a one, I hope," cried the Lady, "as it is for me to have you find me."

Upon the "you" there was, it seemed, the smallest possible stress: yet not so small that it did not encourage Johnsmith to seat himself instantly and without further leave. While doing so, he endeavored to intimate, as

little lumberingly as possible, that her remark contained a notable understatement of the situation.

"And have you," she went on eagerly, "seen this morning the beautiful Lady you wish to marry?"

"Most certainly I have," said Henry Johnsmith.

Once more the Lady clapped her hands and once more they were the smallest and prettiest hands in the world.

"Oh, this is splendid! And have you met her and talked with her? And is she not in all ways the sketching gentleman's drawing come to life, only more beautiful, if that may be?"

"It occurs to me now," said Henry Johnsmith, with a calmness that astonished him, "that we are speaking of different ladies."

"Oh!" she cried in amazement, "are you that sort of man, then—that today you wish to marry one lady, and to-morrow you have set your heart on quite a different one?"

"It appears," said Henry Johnsmith, giving her a look, "that I am that sort of man."

"Then I am disappointed—terribly, terribly! Yesterday I said to myself: 'Here is a tall gentleman who wishes to marry someone. He is far too servile, too adulatory to his friend the sketcher, but I take him for a good man and a true. I will help him,' thought I, 'and bring him and his heart's desire together.' And now this morning you tell me offhand that your heart's desire is no longer your heart's desire, that you have ficklely turned a-wooing elsewhere—is fickle the very best grammar, do you know?—that you have, in short, changed your mind overnight. So I learn, with sorrow, that you are of feeble purpose, and a light-o'-love, and that I cannot really help you after all."

"Madam," said Henry Johnsmith, in a fair copy of his ordinary wooden manner, "of all the ladies that tread the earth and make it a pleasant place to dwell in, you alone can help me."

The Lady wrote and rewrote in her portfolio, and answered never a word.

"What I said yesterday regarding the face of that sketch," explained Johnsmith presently, "was all by way of a merry quip."

She looked up at that and cried: "When a man has plighted his solemn word to a lady it is too late for him to fall to talking of merry quips. I myself heard you swear troth to this lady, and I will not let you be so little honorable as to break it now."

"Because of an idle word," said Johnsmith, aghast, "you would compel me to marry where I do not love?"

"Provided," answered the Lady firmly, "that you can persuade her to have you."

There floated to them just then, from a little distance, the strains of "The Blue Bells of Scotland," villainously played upon a concertina.

Johnsmith sighed. "Before he arrives, madam—for there is no eluding him, it seems—let me ask if you will walk the terrace with me at four this afternoon?"

"Oh, I could not promise that! I never promise that I will do anything, you see. I like not to know what I shall do from minute to minute. Then I am free, free, *free!* And I think to be free is the best thing in all the world. Do not you?"

"No, madam," said Henry Johnsmith.

Then Gobin emerged from behind a bank of flowering shrubs, his concertina in action to the occupation of both his hands, the case strung by a leathern strap across his small and sloping shoulders. Halting ten paces away, without salutation of any kind he looked at them with engrossed, unseeing eyes, the while he played "The Blue Bells" to a squeaky and slanderous finish.

Having done that he shut up the instrument in an alert, businesslike way, put it into the case, deposited the case upon the grass, came forward eight paces, touched his great sun-helmet and said:

"Music, madam, is to me at once a great solace and a great delight."

Very faintly, a twitching seized the

Lady's lips of rose. "Oh," she said, "then you have heard some recently."

"Madam," said Gobin very gravely, "I have made some recently. The selection I just completed," he added, "was the well-known 'Blue Bells of Scotland.'"

"A hundred years ago," answered the Lady oddly, "when you drew your first sketch, did you write beneath it: 'This is a cow?'"

Gobin glanced at Henry Johnsmith, who then said laboriously:

"Pardon, madam, but in a moment you will have him fancying that you do not care for his music."

"Far from me be it," she said determinedly, "to justify so horrible a suspicion. 'The Blue Bells of Scotland' is indeed the sweetest of airs, and I am stupid not to have recognized it. You know other selections, of course?" she said to Gobin. "Later we shall ask you to play some more. But now that you have entertained us so charmingly it surely becomes my turn to do something for our beguilement. You will both be so very glad to know that ten minutes ago I finished my poem. Most of the night, my friends, I lay awake making it up. And now shall I read it?"

"Yes, yes," said Gobin tolerantly.

"By all means," said Henry Johnsmith.

"You remember the first verse? I shall not read that again. Indeed, I am not much used to reading my poems aloud. And I shall not read the second either; it is not really necessary. But it is this idea: that one is so very frail that one's spirit cannot always be kept on the heights; that what the first verse claims so triumphantly is true only of one's best—don't you see?—and that we must know many a fallen day—

"'When my poor feet have lost the way  
That made a song of yesterday.'

"Those are the closing lines of that verse, and I have liked them very, very much; and then, as you would guess, I go on like this:

"'Some day when I can make the boast  
That I have understood the most,  
When I have climbed my last far height  
And stumbled somehow to the light—'"

She was reading very slowly, and had not been able to keep quite all the feeling from her voice; so she broke off now to say very vivaciously:

"And then, you see, there was no idea here which would suit me so well as one which a better *known* poet had already used. So I have had to call my poem 'The Celestial Surgeon,' in quotation marks, and say that it is after Stevenson, which it isn't, and which really seems hardly fair, does it? I mean this, of course:

"'O Lord, then take thy spirit knife  
And fasten me that way for life:  
My best cut free from what defiled,  
My godlikeness quite reconciled.'"

She ended, and for once seemed left without a sally.

"Madam," said Gobin judicially, "I regard it as verse not without merit."

"Be very, very careful," cried the Lady, with eyes very bright, "or you will have me fancying that you do not care greatly for my poetry."

"But, madam, he does," said Henry Johnsmith eagerly. "That is high praise indeed from him. For my part, I may say that I deem it wholly beautiful."

"Is it not?" she cried. "But nobody will take it. It will come back and back and back!"

In Gobin's tired eyes flickered something like the pale wraith of a light.

"Madam," he inquired gravely, "would it make you happy were some publisher to accept your poem?"

"Would it not? As the day is long! But let us talk of other matters, for they will not."

"Oh, will they not?" said Gobin; and for the second time that year, it may be, he smiled, very faintly.

"When you smile," said the Lady, "you look at your very best. Until this minute I had not dreamed that you could do it. You will do it again some time, will you not? And I am sorry now that I said what I did about

your looks yesterday upon the rock, because even then it was not true."

Gobin bent over his concertina-case and did not answer. It was an extraordinary case, when one came to notice it, of great size and made according to his own design at surprising expense. From it he now quickly produced a light, collapsible easel, jointed it, and set it up upon the grass. From another part of it he took a large sheet of cardboard and placed it upon the easel. From still another part—for there seemed no end to the divisions of that amazing receptacle—he took a small paint-box, a palette, a brush and a paper bag containing some six or eight bananas.

Resting the palette upon the thumb of his left hand, he dexterously peeled back a banana with the fingers of the other, bit off a section of it, picked up the brush and said:

"I shall now make you, madam, a drawing to accompany your verses."

Henry Johnsmith looked up, startled, and wondered dazedly what Midsummer madness had laid strange hold upon his friend. In all his life he had known Gobin to make no such proffer as this.

But the Lady, her thoughts still wandering with the thoughts of the verses, only said:

"It would be very nice of you; and for that courtesy I shall afterwards listen the more civilly to your music."

"Madam," said Henry Johnsmith, torn between two emotions, "be careful."

Gobin sighed. "Conversation," he explained patiently, as though someone had put the query to him, "does not annoy me as I paint. I shall be glad to talk with you both, and to hear you talk, in turn, when ideas of real interest occur to you."

"An idea of real interest occurs to me now," almost sang the Lady, so joyous was she suddenly grown. "It is to ask whether you have yet met the wonderful lady of your sketch. Tell me quickly—have you?"

"No," said Gobin gravely, "nor thought of her until this instant."

The Lady's face fell; she turned and looked at Johnsmith. "I see now why you are such friends. Oh, for all your superficial differences, you are as alike as two peas! Purely for the sake of both of you, I contrived to be introduced to her this morning. I shall not think of letting you withdraw now. In ten minutes you will both return with me to the hotel and look, with the privilege of acquaintance and the ardor of devotion, upon that most wonderful face."

"Madam," said Gobin, a little astonished, "such paintings as I shall make for you are not made in ten minutes."

They did not return to the hotel in ten minutes, nor in twenty, nor forty, nor even in an hour. For all his swift and marvelous skill, a painting such as Gobin made for the Lady that day is not, indeed, done in any such time as that. He sat upon the grass, his gifted hands moving deftly and fast, and talked and was talked to; and the moments went dancing by. In just one hour and fifty minutes by the tiny clock set into the top of the concertina case, he rose with the square of cardboard in his hand and came slowly forward.

"Madam," he announced soberly, "when you have gotten your verses in final form I shall letter them in for you upon this painting. And when I have done that never dream that the whole world contains a publisher who would then send them back to you."

The Lady took the board from his hand and looked at it. And she looked and looked and said never a word.

Johnsmith, who had risen clumsily, glanced over her shoulder, and so stood as one struck with sudden dumbness. Even from Gobin, it seemed to him, this was a deep and radiant marvel. There was a woman's figure pictured there, at length, and the wonderful face of it was the face of Gobin's dreams, now glorified in colors. And Johnsmith stared at it, transfixed, while long moments slipped by.

And all this while the Lady looked and looked, and she who was of habit

so full of talk found nothing to say. At last she raised her head, and it was plain then why she had not spoken; for her blue eyes were full to overflowing; and now two bright drops, which she was all too proud to brush away, slipped unheeded down her cheek of white and damask.

It had fallen to Gobin, while he was yet in his youth, to have singular homage paid to him; but in his life none came to him that he valued so highly as the fine tribute of those tears.

And the Lady said: "You are G. Godolphin?"

"Madam," said Gobin, and his dignity was without bound, "I am no other."

Quite suddenly the Lady bowed her face into her hands. . . .

#### IV

ON the hotel porch to which they presently drew nigh thirty persons of various stations and no congeniality stood, after the manner of hotel aggregations, in a restless group and looked at nothing in particular. Near the centre of it stood, as they all instantly perceived, she who Johnsmith had described as the most wonderful lady in the world. While they were yet some fifty yards away it chanced that the group shifted a little and the lady was more perfectly revealed; and they halted dead as by common consent and looked at her.

"Is she not," said the Lady presently, "as I said, more beautiful than the sketch?"

"She is far more beautiful," said Henry Johnsmith, and gasped a little.

"No one," responded Gobin, "is more beautiful than my sketches. But," he added, as if constrained by fairness, "she has a face among a million; I give you that."

"There is a spiritual something in her expression," blurted Henry Johnsmith, "a refinement—"

"And in her conversation, too," cried the Lady blithely. "I talked with her a moment this morning and

showed her the sketch. And oh, she is so fresh and unspoiled and charming and natural and all of those things! But she is also evasive, elusive, slippery. We three know that, do we not? Let us run to her this instant, else she will flit away again before our very eyes and the splendid opportunity be lost."

Vainly did the gentlemen intimate that they would be content to have it so; that such beauty indeed, was most wisely kept for the eye's delight alone. The lady would listen to no such reasoning.

"You will both," she said, stamping her foot, "if you are good men and true, come with me this instant."

So they went with her. And at the top of the steps they came face to face with the wonderful lady and straightway stopped.

"Miss Hartzkoff," said the Lady sweetly, "let me present to you Mr. G. Godolphin."

The wonderful lady bowed. Simultaneously she smiled and her smile, it was to be noted, was vaguely disappointing. Gobin bowed, but he did not smile.

"Madam," said he, "I am honored indeed to know you."

"It suddenly occurs to me," whispered the Lady to Gobin, in pretty dismay, "that the tall gentleman's name is unknown to me."

"Then—Miss Hartzkoff," said Gobin courteously, "I present to you Mr. Johnsmith."

"Pleased," affirmed the wonderful lady, tossing her head a little, "to meet you, Mr. Smith."

"Mr. Johnsmith," said Gobin somewhat coldly.

"Madam," said Henry Johnsmith stoutly, "the pleasure is mutual."

He bowed. So did Gobin. Everyone bowed. And the wonderful lady, opening her wonderfully beautiful mouth, said:

"Which of you——?"

But she got no further than that. A large, stoutish gentleman, rather bald, with pink cheeks and flowing blond mustaches, stood suddenly before her, bowing, impatient, adoring.



"Are you ready, Mamie?" coaxed he most eagerly.

And without awaiting any formal affirmative he laid masterful hold upon her crooked elbow by way of steadying her down the stairs; and so bore her away unprotesting, bowing her civil excuses and farewells over her shoulder of a Grecian goddess.

Johnsmith and Gobin stood upon the steps and watched her going silently, each concerned with such meditations as the occasion seemed to make appropriate.

"Her smile," said Johnsmith, all in good time, "is a little, just a little——"

"The same," said Gobin, looking about for the Lady, "might be said of her voice."

But the Lady had somehow slipped away, and was no more to be seen that morning.

## V

To the rock where they had sat in the golden afternoon and looked abroad over the land the road ran up and up, rocky and winding and difficult to the foot of man. And the sun was hot at half-after three o'clock, and climbing not a delightful business for him who would have dallied below in the shade, passing the time of day with his most agreeable comrade.

However, there was no help for it, and when once they had gotten that into their heads Gobin and Johnsmith did not pause to complain.

Half an hour before, which was directly after luncheon, the Lady had come to them in a state of great elation.

"Ever since I left you this morning," she began at once in her sudden fashion, "I have done nothing but plan, plan, plan. I have wanted more than anything to contrive a meeting for you that would be a *real* meeting. And now—only think!—I have done it. She is at this moment—where do you guess? On the very rock where we three met yesterday afternoon!"

Nothing in the two gentlemen's mien indicated that they were over-excited by this disclosure.

"So up this instant, gentlemen! For now you are to fly to her directly and there on that great rock of ours, tell her, in accents that cannot be mistaken, the story of your admiration and your love."

"What you propose, madam," said Gobin uneasily, "would be no better than bigamy."

"Madam," said Henry Johnsmith, "he wishes to go alone, you perceive. His wish, it chances, coincides with my own. I pray you, therefore, have me excused."

"Never, never!" cried the Lady.

"Lest there be any misunderstanding, madam," said Gobin, eying Johnsmith coldly, "I will say that if it be a duty with me to walk this afternoon I should prefer to take my exercise in your company upon the terrace."

"That," she cried, "is quite, quite absurd! And now, this very instant, start! There is no time to lose, not a second!"

"And if we refuse, madam?" said Gobin and Johnsmith together.

"Then—then," said the Lady, her white brow puckered into a frown, "then I shall remember for the first time that you have never been introduced to me and you shall see my face no more."

So they got up, displeased men, but resolved, and donned their hats, and left the concertina at the office and set their faces rather grimly toward the mountain. And turning back where the road swept sharply into the forest, they saw the Lady, a fair figure in the flooding sun, still standing upon the piazza, still waving after them her gay felicitations.

They plodded on and on, and though the rock lay from the hotel a matter of three full quarters of an hour, such was their odd humor that in all that time they addressed each other with never a word.

In time the path rose so high that though it was still a hundred yards from the rock the whole top of it became all at once plainly visible. And there upon this top sat the won-

derful lady of the sketch, and she was quite alone.

"If you wish it," said Henry Johnsmith then in a low voice, "I will remain here and allow you to go the rest of the way alone."

"On the contrary," replied Gobin succinctly.

So they drew near together, paused upon the edge of the rock, and when the lady looked up and saw them bowed promptly and low.

"Madam," said Gobin, struck anew with the wonder and the glory of that face, "I salute you."

"And I, too, madam," said Henry Johnsmith, staring and staring, "present my greetings and my humble duty."

In the friendliest way in the world the lady smiled and bowed, and as she did so something of the splendor went out of her face, so definitely that it was curious and strange. And opening her beautiful lips she finished the query which she had started to put that morning.

"Which of you gen'l'men was it," she asked so archly as to be positively roguish, "done that lovely sketcher me?"

The question fell into a little silence so dead, so clear, as to catch and hold it forever, like a venturesome fly imprisoned in some splendid jelly-mold that was to stand a lifetime in a pastry-cook's window. The silence, however, lasted the merest second. Then with an instinct that showed him for all his foibles the very perfect, gentle knight, "Madam," said Gobin a trifle defiantly, "I done it."

"It cert'n'y," said the lady, with her terribly sociable smile—"it cert'n'y was a grand drawin'."

So Gobin's acquaintance with his beautiful dream lady ended, as did so many of his acquaintanceships, with a compliment. For those were the last words he ever heard her say. A gentleman emerged at that moment from the woods, a stoutish, florid, bareheaded gentleman who had been, if the dripping tin cup in his hand meant anything, to a near-by spring for water, and who now advanced toward the

lady as one sure and over-sure of his welcome.

"Well, madam," said Gobin somewhat hastily, "we must be continuing our walk, I fear. Seeing you here, we merely stopped in passing to express our regards and felicitations."

"A pleasure, madam," said Henry Johnsmith, "to have seen you."

Into the lady's broad and friendly smile they bowed with immense seriousness, quite ignoring the plain overtures of her gentleman friend for social recognition of some sort or other; and so turned and stalked gravely down the hill and out of the life of the beautiful lady. For so long as they both did live neither of them ever laid eyes upon her again.

Half a mile down the slope Gobin, speaking for the first time, said, not without watchfulness:

"She is unquestionably as charming as she is beautiful."

And Henry Johnsmith answered, so quickly as to suggest that he had been waiting for such a chance as this: "When I said yesterday that hers was the most wonderful face in the world I had not then seen another Lady—less beautiful, perhaps, as you artists gauge beauty, but—so it seems to me—far, far more wonderful. And so, for yonder lady up the hill, I am happy to hear you say what you say. I should have been distressed indeed were you, who in a sense invented her, as disappointed in her as was I."

"It seems," said Gobin rather testily, "that you have failed to perceive the drift of my remarks."

A quarter of a mile farther on he added: "What, when you come to think of it, is a little slip of grammar? In a careless moment, the very best of us are likely to make them. Surely you would not throw her over for any such trifle as that?"

"I!" cried Henry Johnsmith. "Pardon my surprise, but the matter, you see, appears to be one which concerns yourself alone."

"Me!" said Gobin almost hotly.

"You," Johnsmith reminded him, "saw her first."

"You claimed her first!"

"You," Johnsmith again reminded him, "claimed them all."

Gobin booted a pebble from his path with a vigor such as his oldest friends had seldom seen him display.

On the hotel porch he spoke again. "Inasmuch as we are here together, Henry," he said, with forced geniality, "perhaps I should mention that I am, virtually, engaged for the next hour or so."

"By an odd coincidence," said Henry Johnsmith doggedly, "I am virtually engaged myself from this very hour until bedtime."

Gobin looked at Johnsmith indignantly, and found that Johnsmith was looking indignantly at him. They stood like this for quite a little while. Then with an air of arrogance that was no more offensive than it was meant to be—

"Let," said Gobin, "the Lady settle it."

At the office desk, whither they straightway repaired, he said to the clerk peremptorily:

"Send word to the Lady that Messrs. Johnsmith and G. Godolphin would talk with her a moment."

The man did not ask Gobin what lady he meant, which was just as well. Hotel clerks know everything: that is why they hold their positions and why they feel justified in wearing so lordly a demeanor. So this one said at once and briskly:

"She left, sir, on the 4.10 this afternoon."

"Left the hotel!" cried both together.

The clerk intimated that they had heard him correctly, and added in his disinterested, clerkly way: "She left a note . . ."

Gobin tore it open with feigned calmness, and read, while Johnsmith peered over his shoulder:

"She is dear, is she not? I bought a hat of her a year ago—had I mentioned that she is in the millinery way?—and I have never forgotten her beautiful face and her natural, charming ways. And I wish you both a great, great deal of luck, and may the very best man win!

"Good-bye, and thank you both for everything."

"ANASTASIA KERME."

"Anastasia Kerme!" said Gobin aloud; and his forehead bent into a thoughtful frown. "I have heard that name before somewhere."

Johnsmith, with almost a frightened face, slipped his great hand into the breast-pocket of his coat . . .

Gobin's face cleared. "Three years ago," he said, with a light in his eyes, "I chanced to read a number of the *Axminster Review*. It was the only thing I read that year, I remember. In it there was a poem. Ah, well! . . . I cut it out, and that is something that in all my life I have never done before or since. It stands to this day in the mirror of my dressing-table, where my eye falls upon it each morning as I shave. And the name that is printed beneath it is the name that I find written upon this note."

Johnsmith, by this time, had gotten out his pocketbook; he took from it a little slip of worn paper, with print on it, and stared at it as one in a dream.

"I, too," he said presently, "read the *Axminster Review* three years ago. I, too, read and cut out the sonnet of Anastasia Kerme. Until, long ago, I came to know it by heart I would read it anew each morning as another man might say his prayers; for I have long held it to be the most beautiful poem in the world."

"That did not keep her, it seems," responded Gobin acidly, "from breaking the engagement you claimed to have with her this afternoon."

"Can I serve you further, sir?" asked the clerk, who had a yellow-back, broken open in the middle, waiting for him under the counter.

"But certainly," said Gobin sharply. "My concertina-case this instant!"

## VI

AN hour later, clasping to his bosom the instrument which he had not been playing, he rose from the grass beneath the mimosa-tree, made for the hotel

with a cautious eye roving over the purview, and stood again at the desk.

"Where," he demanded, "did Miss Kerme go?"

"She did not say, sir," responded the clerk, glancing up from his novel. "A gentleman was here inquiring a little while ago. Possibly the mail-clerk——"

Gobin went to the mail-clerk's desk.

"Did Miss Kerme leave any address with you for the forwarding of her mail?"

The woman favored him with a smile for which he could have garroted her. "No, sir, she didn't. Another gentleman asked me the same question half an hour ago. I told him he better ask the head porter——"

The head porter was partaking of cold cabbage in the kitchen, and had to be summoned.

"Miss Kerme," said Gobin sternly—"the young lady who left on the 4.10—where did you check her baggage to?"

The darkey grinned deprecatingly. "Anurr gen'l'm'n wuz——"

"Damn the other gentleman!"

"Suh? Yassuh. En I was tellin' him dat she didn' hab no baggage, suh. Only one ob dem dress-suit cases. I notic't yistiddy when she come——"

"Even with a suit-case," said Gobin in a terrible voice, "she must have gone somewhere. *Where?*"

"Yassuh. Boss, if you wuz to ast the ticket-gen'l'm'n at the station, he mout— Yassuh. Thank you, suh!"

The station was a long half-mile away, and the sun was yet very noticeably hot. Gobin, however, was a determined man who balked at nothing. Half-way over he met Johnsmith coming back, and smiling to himself as he walked. The two old friends passed each other without a word.

At the station, Gobin looked in the window and saw a young man in shirt-sleeves writing a ledger.

"Agent," he said confidentially, "a young lady bought a ticket of you for the 4.10—a rather small lady—in—in white, with—er——"

"She went to Richmond," said the agent, without looking up.

It was at that moment that Gobin gave what there is reason to believe was his third smile that year.

"Agent," he said very pleasantly, "try one of these cigars. I can vouch for their being not half-bad."

The agent, looking up then, retorted: "Don't mind if I do."

"And the next train for Richmond?" inquired Gobin.

"Ten-thirty. I'm stamping the ticket now, sir."

Gobin marveled at the young man's intelligence, prescience and perspicacity. He thought that he had never seen so delightful a young man.

"And the Pullman reservation, agent?"

"Very sorry, sir. Haven't a berth left—sold my last one to a party from the hotel not fifteen minutes ago."

In the hotel lobby Henry Johnsmith was waiting, nominally engrossed in his New York paper. Gobin greeted him kindly, and dropped into the next chair. It was then a quarter-past six. About seven Gobin rose, stretched, yawned and said:

"Considering that we are here, in a sense, together, Henry, perhaps I should mention that I am leaving by the 10.10 this evening."

"Curiously enough," said Johnsmith woodenly, "I also am leaving by that identical train."

"So," said Gobin calmly, "I fancied."

Johnsmith added: "I was on the point of mentioning it."

"Unfortunately," continued Gobin, "I was able to secure no Pullman accommodation whatever."

Johnsmith said nothing.

"It appears," resumed his friend, turning more fully toward him, "that someone from the hotel bought the last berth not fifteen minutes before I arrived."

Still Johnsmith answered never a word.

"To sit the night in a soiled day coach," said Gobin, his unwinking eye upon the unwinking eye of Johnsmith, "will go hard with a man of my delicate constitution."

Johnsmith got up, went out into the veranda, lit a long cigar, smoked it through, came back to the lobby and found Gobin standing precisely where he had left him. It was then about a quarter to eight.

"Gobin," said Johnsmith quietly, "you are a frail man, physically a weakling, nervous, anemic, sensitive

to cold. You suffer from indigestion. You might die of a cinder down the back of your neck. You are not able to compete on equal terms with such a man as I. You may have that berth."

"Henry," said Gobin gravely, picking up his concertina-case and speaking for the last time that night, "I thank you."



## ISOLATION

By Elsa Barker

SOMETIMES when I am very close to you  
 In form and feeling, suddenly a thought  
 Of our eternal separateness makes naught  
 Of all our vows, and I am smitten through  
 With sense of isolation. Is it true,  
 Beloved, that the visions we have caught  
 Of perfect union, may be phantoms wrought  
 Of our own brains, and dyed in their own hue?

When in my very arms you lie asleep  
 Your dreams may be a thousand miles away.  
 I hear your words, but unknown meanings keep  
 Vigil behind your lips; and when we say,  
 "Forever, Love!" our listening angels weep,  
 Gazing at one another in dismay.



## IN YELLOW JOURNALDOM

"MAN to see you."  
 "What does he want?"

"Wants you to take back something which was printed in yesterday's paper."

"Tell him it will not be necessary for him to come in; we've already taken back everything we printed yesterday."

November, 1907—4

# A GLASS MOUNTAIN

By van Tassel Sutphen

**N**OW the way in which it happened was this:

The Truly Princess and Fairer-than-a-Fairy and the Eldest Sister had graduated together from the Abbey. There had been no special intimacy between them, but it is the tradition among loyal Abbeians to stick by the colors, and, living in the same town, chance meetings had been more or less frequent. And then once a year they were accustomed to foregather formally, taking in rotation the office of hostess. On this particular occasion it had been the Eldest Sister's turn, and she being the daughter of a chocolate manufacturer (a synonym for wealth) had provided a really gorgeous blow-out, a grand-tier box for a "Siegfried" matinée.

The curtain was down and the three young women lingered for a moment in the lobby, talking disjointedly as people often do when a parting is imminent.

"We might go to the Brass Kettle for tea and buns," suggested Blanche-Rose. "Dutch treat," she added hastily.

"Nonsense," said the Eldest Sister, with the inevitable flourish that Fairer-than-a-Fairy had hoped to forestall. "This is still my day and we'll have cake instead of buns; come on, girls."

While they waited for the tea to draw the conversation harked back to the performance.

"It was superb," said the Princess. "I can't imagine anything finer, Irene."

"I don't know about that," answered the Eldest Sister, still wearing her air of proprietorship. "The wood winds

were distinctly out, and, as usual, they economized on red fire."

"I didn't notice," said the Princess apologetically. "Indeed, I never do. Once the crackling rhythm of the fire music begins I have eyes for nothing but the first flash of Siegfried's sword—the coming of the hero."

"Well, there was a frightful draught in the wings; you could see those absurd pasteboard rocks shivering and shaking like a—a——"

"Chocolate pudding," put in Blanche-Rose. Fairer-than-a-Fairy could scratch when she chose and the Eldest Sister's way of saying things had been distinctly provocative all afternoon.

"Anyhow Brunhilde was perfect. Wasn't she the loveliest creature conceivable as she lay there waiting—waiting? Just as the women must always wait," concluded the Princess, with the gentle finality of the obvious truism.

"Must she?" retorted Fairer-than-a-Fairy. "I'm sure she doesn't—not often, anyway."

The Princess looked disturbed, but the Eldest Sister laughed. "Remember, Serena," she said, "that you are the Truly Princess living at the top of your inaccessible glass mountain. What do you know about the affairs of the common underworld?"

"It's just the fact of your being a princess," persisted Blanche-Rose, "that makes it impossible for you to remain on your pinnacle. Unless, indeed, you prefer your splendid isolation."

"Royalty must always speak the first word," added the Eldest Sister.



"Didn't Queen Victoria propose to Albert the Good?"

"But honestly, Blanche-Rose——"

"I'm in dead earnest, my dear. It's the popular theory, I know, that the woman waits for Prince Charming to throw the handkerchief. But does she?"

The Princess stirred her tea in silence.

"Now **man** labors under the delusion that he chooses his mate to suit his imperial fancy. In actual fact he is chosen. Of course the methods are different. The man rides in a straight line behind the hounds and once in a while the quarry is brought to a standstill. Oftener the cover is drawn blank, or the chase gets clean away. But he has had what he calls the sport and is content.

"Now we women are after the bag, and nothing else will satisfy us. So we leave the brass bands at home and go in for the still-hunt—it's surer. The trap and deadfall, you know. We don't even disdain the use of poisoned bait."

"Unsportsmanlike!" ejaculated the Princess.

"Granted, but we are women; the pelt's the thing and we must bring it home on our shoulders or stand disgraced in the eyes of all the sisterhood."

The Truly Princess fidgeted with her teaspoon. "I don't like to hear you say such things," she said.

"Dearest Serena, let us be reasonable and see the world as it is. Oh, I know well enough that we can't do things in the same way as a man, but we get them done nevertheless. Yes, and we take precious good care of our own necks in the bargain; we don't risk anything. For instance, there are the cases of unrequited affection. A woman is pitied because she can't make a move of any kind; she must suffer in silence. Well, we all know that she can do something, but I am not going to give away trade secrets. The important point is that if everything fails there is no harm done; nobody knows what has happened.

"But the man! He is never sure of his ground and at the last he has to take

the plunge—it is required of him to lay his cards on the table, or the game is blocked indefinitely. And then if he doesn't win, he loses everything.

"Oh, we are not sportsmen and we may as well own up to it. But we do know right well how to play our own sneaky little game—nothing to lose and everything to win. What chance has poor man against our arrows from ambush? Fortunately, he is too conceited to appreciate the odds against him; he wouldn't believe that it was a trap even if it had him by the leg."

The Princess frowned. "All women are not the same," she observed.

"Yes, they are, if it comes down to getting the one thing they want. I don't mean that they will all use underhand means, but they will accomplish the desired result somehow. You, for instance, will have to descend from your glass mountain."

"Never! *J'y suis; j'y reste.*"

"With the right man standing forever at the bottom of that slippery slope! You don't know yourself, Serena."

"I think I do."

"You are quite too absurd," continued the Princess warmly. "Speaking generally, I suppose a woman can marry, if she wants to. But whom she wants to—quite another thing."

"Do you wish me to prove it?"

"Sure you're playing fair?" put in the Eldest Sister. "Show us your fourth finger, Blanche-Rose."

Fairer-than-a-Fairy finished her second thimbleful of blackberry cordial. Her eyes were stars and a red flag flew on either cheek. "Yes, and I will prove it," she said defiantly. "You'll give me odds, of course."

This was intolerable and the Princess drew on her gloves. "I have some calls to make," she said vaguely, and rose. "It has been most delightful, Irene; thank you so much. Do come and see me—Thursdays, you know." She nodded stiffly to Blanche-Rose and went out.

Curiously enough it was the Eldest Sister only who showed signs of resentment. "Of all the superlatively overbearing persons——" she began.

"Manners, money and morals are

the three constituents of polite society," said Fairer-than-a-Fairy meditatively. "Serena, being a Truly Princess, possesses all three."

"I never pretended to be pious," sneered the Eldest Sister. "Serena does settlement work, I believe."

"It's your money that saves you," said Fairer-than-a-Fairy sweetly. "Come to me for manners."

The Eldest Sister glowered at her tea-cup. "Do you ever mean what you say?" she asked.

"Always."

"You can have your wager, then. A pair of gloves against a set of furs—well, we'll say up to four hundred dollars."

"You're so admirably businesslike, Irene."

"I'm giving you big odds, because the chances are against you. You intimidated any man and I shall name one—the Paragon."

"The Paragon!" said Fairer-than-a-Fairy in surprise. "You *are* going to make me prove my case."

"Do you want to back out?"

"Not at all. Only that I rather like him and in spite of his ridiculous nickname he isn't the least bit of a prig. It doesn't seem quite fair."

"Then it's off?"

"By no manner of means. I need new furs—really."

"Very good—that's settled. Shall we have another drawing of tea?"

"I don't mind. You see I shall make this my dinner."

"You might come home with me."

"Oh, no; thank you."

There was a short silence.

"The Princess was freezingly royal to you just now," observed the Eldest Sister.

"She doesn't understand, you see. The adventuress type is naturally incomprehensible to the well-to-do."

"She needn't have been quite so nasty. How did she know but that it was all in fun?"

"But it wasn't. I can't hold that up against her."

Again the pot was empty and Fairer-than-a-Fairy hospitably bestowed the

remnants of the feast upon the house cat; the Eldest Sister pushed her chair back noisily.

"After six o'clock!" she exclaimed. "Remember that today's the twenty-fourth of November. That gives you until Christmas Eve."

"By the way, hasn't the Paragon been devoted to Serena for years?" asked Blanche-Rose. Her tone was absolutely matter-of-fact, but the Eldest Sister's eyes contracted to the narrowest of slits. "What difference does that make?" she demanded suspiciously.

"None at all; I only inquired."

"They say so."

"And she continues to sit upon her glass mountain that no mere man could possibly ascend, even if he dared to make the attempt. Isn't it a funny world, Eldest Sister?"

"Sorry, my dear, but I'm late—frightfully so. Can't I give you a lift in my hansom? Drop you anywhere you like."

"Thanks, but until I get those furs it's better for me to walk; it keeps up the circulation, you know."

As the Truly Princess turned the corner into the avenue she saw just ahead of her a well-known figure—the Paragon. He passed so near that she might have touched him; even now she had but to utter his name and he would surely respond. The Princess thought of the sea-coal fire in the library at her house; it was a comfortable thing to sit in front of and she knew that Annesley would be grateful for the invitation—he always was. It would be nice to talk over Siegfried with him; he had the faculty of understanding things so perfectly, the things that one does not put into words. Then, too, he was a good friend, perhaps the best one among the men she knew—no nonsense about their intimacy, either. She half opened her lips and stopped; the memory of that conversation over the tea-cups at the Brass Kettle came back to her with disagreeable force. This was just the sort of thing that women did when they

wanted—but the thought was too disgusting to be put into words. After all, she ought to see Mrs. Ballard about the night music-classes at the settlement. She slackened her pace and the next instant the crowd had swallowed him up. The Princess hailed a passing cab and drove on to Mrs. Ballard's.

A month goes quickly in town when the season is on, and engagements keep piling up in geometrical ratio. And yet a few days before Christmas the Truly Princess awoke to the consciousness that it was a long time since she had exchanged more than a passing word with the Paragon. She had been used to his dropping in, say once a week, for an hour's chat before that sea-coal fire, and she had really missed him. He had been in the habit of telling her about the law cases that he happened to have on, and she had found the confidences interesting—nothing so pleases a woman as to feel that she is being consulted about a man's affairs—matters that really count.

Yes, it actually had been weeks since Annesley had come. Why? Was it her fault? Certainly not. She had always been nice to him—had made him feel that he was welcome at any time. A woman might do no more; indeed she could not, if she happened to be a Truly Princess and lived, as everybody knew, on the top of a glass mountain. At this precise point in her musings Mr. Annesley was announced.

"Come into the library," she said, as they shook hands. "I like to have the fire to look at and so do you. A wretched day, isn't it, with that chilly, leaden sky. But we can draw the curtains and shut it out."

Annesley obeyed, but once comfortably bestowed on the other side of the hearth and the usual commonplaces passed, he relapsed upon an unwonted silence. The Princess, however, talked energetically. What was he doing now? She had been quite interested in that mine suit, and had never heard the outcome. It must be all of two months since he had spoken of it; well, six weeks, then.

Annesley refused to be drawn; his brow remained clouded, and he even declined the ministrations of the tea-table.

"I say, Serena," he blurted out at last, and the Princess sat a little straighter in her chair; she devoutly hoped that he was not meditating anything foolish and uncalled-for.

"The fact is," continued Annesley, "that I'm in difficulty, rather a curious one. I thought that you might be willing to—er—advise me." He had been going to say "help me," but the words had halted on his tongue.

"Why, of course. What is it?"

"What is a man to do when he discovers that a woman is in love with him? I'm not a coxcomb, Serena; you know that, and so I can speak frankly."

The Princess, sitting at the very summit of her glass mountain, felt that a cold wind had suddenly arisen; perhaps a maid had left a window open somewhere or there was a back draught from the fireplace. "Do!" she echoed inanely.

"That's it—what to do. But let me tell you about it." The Princess made a swift gesture of deprecation, but Annesley took no note.

"I can't tell you, for the life of me, just how it happened. It simply came about that I was thrown more or less in her company for the last few weeks. A thoroughly nice girl, you understand that, of course.

"Well, things slipped along from day to day. I liked and valued her friendship and that there could be anything more in it I never dreamed; I am speaking the absolute truth."

"Yes, I know; go on."

"As I say, I liked the girl. She was not in the least like you—that couldn't be—but we had some things in common. She didn't mind bothering about that old violin of mine, for instance. We used to plow through acres of stuff—just sight reading for the fun of it."

The Princess averted her face a little further. The Paragon was a charming man, certainly; but he never quite

succeeded in getting chromatic passages in tune, and you remember that a Truly Princess is able to detect the presence of a pea through four-and-twenty eiderdown coverlets and as many mattresses. And so she had given up playing his accompaniments, although he had never been quite aware of the fact.

"That sort of thing, you know," continued Annesley. "A chap doesn't realize that he is getting in—really he doesn't. And then one day the shock comes."

"Some kind friend, I suppose."

"It was Irene what's-her-name—the girl you call the Eldest Sister."

"And she told you that poor Blanche-Rose was slowly pining away—a blighted heart and all that."

Annesley crimsoned. "I didn't mention any names," he stammered. "At least I hadn't intended to."

"No, you didn't. It was the feminine instinct for arriving at a conclusion."

"It struck me all in a heap," went on Annesley moodily. "With some girls I shouldn't have cared. A man knows a flirt quick enough, and it's a fair give and take. But with a nice girl—well, it's different."

"Quite so."

"I suppose there's only one thing," said Annesley after a lengthy pause. He looked appealingly at the Princess, but the latter sat up straighter than ever and vouchsafed no word.

"Only one thing. Otherwise I couldn't hold up my head before you or any decent woman."

"You mean that you intend proposing to her?"

"Yes."

"Oh," said the Princess in her coldest tone, and at that she turned her head away entirely. There was a miserable pause.

"I thought you'd agree with me," said Annesley after the silence had positively exhausted itself. "You don't mind my bothering you about it?"

"Of course not. Aren't we old friends?"

"That's all right, then," said Annes-

ley. He hesitated and finally rose to go.

"Now that you've made up your mind, you ought not to delay," remarked the Princess quite indifferently.

"I sha'n't, of course. It shall be settled at the Grahams' dance tomorrow. Are you going?"

"Probably."

"Will you save me a two-step?" This with an eagerness almost unseemly.

"You'll have other things to think of," said the Princess reprovingly, and Annesley hung his head. The Princess waited a moment, and then:

"I beg your pardon; I didn't intend to say anything disagreeable."

"Then you forgive me?"

The Princess opened wide her beautiful blue eyes, and Annesley fell back abashed. "Forgive you!" she said. "What could I have to forgive? I thank you, Mr. Annesley, for the confidence you have reposed in me, and wish you every happiness. Good-bye."

Left alone the Truly Princess rolled her lace handkerchief into a ball, thrust it between the bars of the grate and rammed it in hard with the poker. Most indecorous behavior, of course, but she was in a green rage and had to do something. She was angry, furiously angry, with the Paragon; half an hour ago she would not have believed it possible that she could be so put out with any one of her fellow-beings. "Such a *bêtise*!" she exclaimed. "There is no English word that quite expresses it. Besides, one can never be sure; he might have said and done things—" but here her sense of justice smote her—she knew Annesley. As for Fairer-than-a-Fairy, she would not even condescend to think of her; some people are distinctly not worth while.

There was a dinner-party on for that night and the man who took out the Princess paid dearly for the honor and has never, to this day, understood why. For when a Truly Princess is out of sorts somebody has to suffer. Fortunately, the menu was excellent, and he was able to find his consolation in it.

Now the Princess had had no idea whatever of making a call on Fairer-than-a-Fairy, and yet the following afternoon found her doing that self-same thing. Purely altruistic motives, she told herself, and really she had never been to see Blanche-Rose since the latter had taken up her abode in the Lady Kitty Sterling Hotel. Anyhow, she went.

The Lady Kitty Sterling is intended exclusively for gentlewomen in reduced circumstances, and it is really not a bad sort of place, barring the white-and-black checker-board oilcloth with which the hallways are covered, the absence of an elevator and some other minor inconveniences. The situation, you see, is unexceptionable, and the apartments are "semi-housekeeping," a vague classification which permits the practice of many domestic economies. Really, the Lady Kitty Sterling fills a long-felt want.

Fairer-than-a-Fairy was at home and received her visitor with a cordiality slightly tintured with surprise. But that was to be expected.

"So good of you to come, Serena," she said as she kissed the Princess. "Can you find a place to sit—oh, be careful! I forgot about the eggs."

It was too late. The Princess had taken her seat on the tiny davenport (it was a bed by night) without noticing the brown paper bag tucked into a corner. There was an ominous squashing sound and the Princess rose hastily.

"Lucky you didn't lean back hard," said Fairer-than-a-Fairy. "There's just one spot on the back breadth and I've got it out beautifully." The *disjecta membra* of the eggs were consigned to the coal-scuttle, and the guest was installed in a morris-chair that looked and proved to be a safe haven of refuge.

The Princess was crimson with vexation, but it was not on account of her skirt. "What on earth were you doing with eggs, Blanche-Rose?" she asked, by way of covering her confusion. "Doing over your hair, I suppose.

They say that the white of eggs is a splendid dressing."

"I had them to eat," said Fairer-than-a-Fairy bluntly, and the Princess colored again.

"You know that they let us cook here," continued the hostess. "That is, if we can make out with the gas burner. Oil stoves are too dangerous and smelly."

"Oh," said the Princess and looked away helplessly. She found herself gazing straight at the window, whose panes were plastered with various articles of feminine wear.

"Also washing," continued Fairer-than-a-Fairy relentlessly. "That is, handkerchiefs and stocks and the like. It's an old boarding-house dodge—pasting them on the glass while they're wet. Saves ironing, you know, and I'm too high up to be seen from the street."

The Princess felt intensely uncomfortable. "That is clever," she murmured.

"Stern necessity, my dear child. After all, what is one to do? My father's half-pay is just enough to ensure existence at what they prefer to call a *pension*, with bonbons and an occasional *matinée* ticket for the *mater*. They're quite content, but I had to do something to keep myself in evidence, and so I struck out for the Lady Kitty Sterling. It gives me my *pied-à-terre*, and the address reads well on one's visiting-cards. As for the rest of it, I do very nicely, thank you. I have three sets of housekeeping accounts to write up, and that pays the rent. Then, if I'm lucky, there are engagement books and calling lists to balance, and once in a while Irene presents me with an old hat, which I do over à *merveille*—sheer, native genius, you know. Really, I get on famously."

The Princess was so embarrassed that she kept her eyes fixed on her muff. Was she actually suspected of the meanness of coming to spy out the nakedness of the land? And how about the real object of her visit; would it be possible to introduce it now? She remained silent.

"It's my only chance—keeping myself in the limelight," went on Fairer-than-a-Fairy, with disconcerting frankness. "To have a face for a fortune is all very well, but it doesn't produce any income. You have to go on eating up your principal, and that's ruinous financiering, isn't it? Bound to be a smash-up along in the late thirties."

The Princess found her tongue stumbingly. "I came because—because I heard—" She halted again.

"Have you, really! Well, I'm not 'denigeing of it.' You see the Eldest Sister made it worth my while—a set of furs against a pair of white gloves. Sounds horrid, doesn't it; but my poor old sables are about done up."

"Irene! Do you mean to say that it was Irene!"

"None other. You wouldn't take me up, and so she volunteered to lay the odds. Long ones, too, for she chose to name the victim, and she knew that paragons are difficult."

"It was Irene herself who gave Mr.—er—him to understand that the situation was—well, serious. Really, I don't quite see——"

Fairer-than-a-Fairy looked at her visitor in a manner half-contemptuous, half-compassionate. "That is because you are a truly Princess," she said almost gently.

The Princess stopped fingering her watch-guard and met her adversary's eye squarely. "It isn't fair, Blanche-Rose," she said. "You know it isn't."

"Fair to whom?"

"To him, of course. You couldn't trifle with a man's deepest feelings on account of a set of furs—it's incredible! To lead him on, to actually allow him—oh, you couldn't, you couldn't."

"There's a way out of that," said Fairer-than-a-Fairy quite coolly. "Why shouldn't I take him for good and all? I'll never get a better offer."

"But you don't love him; you know you don't."

Fairer-than-a-Fairy shrugged her shoulders. "I am tired of all this," she said brusquely. "But since you seem so concerned about our friend's

welfare, I'll give you the one opportunity to prove it. Come and take him away yourself."

"That is impossible," said the Princess, flushing a rosy red.

"Then run along and don't bother me."

"Do you mean that you won't do the only decent thing and let him go?"

Fairer-than-a-Fairy moved over to the tea-table and rattled aimlessly among the cups for a moment or two. Then she turned on her guest, vehemently, fiercely.

"How dare you come here and speak to me like that?" she demanded, her voice tense and vibrating. "You think that you despise me because I am heartless and mercenary—an adventuress, if you like. But it is you, you who ought really to be ashamed; yes, you who sit on top of your glass mountain, and play the fine lady, and will not lift your little finger to save the man for whom you pretend to care. Care! If you care you would be pulling my hair by now, and I could forgive you for it. But you don't care—except for yourself."

The Princess sat stunned and appalled.

"Why don't you offer the final insult of trying to overbid Irene? I might be induced to sell her out, if it were a question of a long coat in addition. And you are even better able to afford the price than our dear Eldest Sister."

"I think," said the Princess, rising, "that I had better go."

"Obviously. But don't forget your card-case, and let me pull your stole straight."

They stood for a moment on the threshold, facing each other.

"There is just one thing I might add," said Fairer-than-a-Fairy, with a slight degree of hesitancy. "The day that it all happened I wasn't quite myself. To tell the truth I had eaten nothing except a glass of milk, since early morning, and the cordial went to my head a little. Quite a touch of melodrama, isn't it? But when one is hungry——"

"Blanche-Rose!"



"I suppose, too, that I ought to apologize for flying off the handle in such a fishwifery way. But I meant it—every word of it. If you want him you'll have to come and fetch; I won't step back an inch on that.

"Finally, I'm not entirely unmindful of the other person concerned. If the worst came to the worst, I should feel that I owed him something and should try and make it up to him—you understand, don't you? Good-bye, and mind the step at the turn; it's rather dark in the hall."

The Princess drove home in company with various complex emotions. Such a distracting, such a positively unheard-of *impasse*! Fortunately her head was aching frightfully and that would be a good excuse for not appearing at the Grahams' dance. She went to her room, had her maid put her to bed and tried not to think.

But this last was impossible. Think! her brain refused to entertain anything else but the image of what had passed, and of what was certain to follow within the next few hours. How slow they wore away! There was an eternity between each successive striking of the church clock at the corner. And then they began to fly—ten, eleven, twelve; it was after midnight already.

A new species of gadfly joined the tormenting throng and the Princess sat bolt upright in bed. Supposing, just supposing that Blanche-Rose had said both more and less than she really meant. The Paragon was a most amiable person and there had been that close intimacy of over a month. Annesley himself? Well, he was a mere man, after all, and she was Fairer-than-a-Fairy. The Princess considered and then rang for her maid—a long, insistent pressure on the button.

An hour after midnight and the Grahams' dance was in full swing. As the Princess entered the ball-room she encountered the Eldest Sister. The latter was gorgeous in a Paris frock, but discontent, as usual, sat enthroned upon her countenance; the expression became intensified as she

caught sight of the Princess. "Thought you weren't coming," she said. "How is your poor head?"

"Right as can be," answered the Princess and moved on; positively, the Eldest Sister looked uglier than ever.

Neither Blanche-Rose nor Annesley was on the dancing-floor, and the Princess turned a trifle pale; was she too late, then? A dozen courtiers pressed forward, but she waved them all back. "It's a little warm in here," she observed, "but please—I don't want anyone to go out with me; I shall be all right in a moment or two."

The Princess knew exactly where she was going—an alcove opening on the library, and the only logical place in the Graham establishment for a tête-à-tête. She pushed aside the draperies that half-concealed the recess and looked in. They were there, sitting side by side on a divan. Annesley sprang up, his face lightening as he recognized the intruder, and the Princess felt her heart leap within her.

"How do you do, Blanche-Rose? I heard Mr. Riddle inquiring for your whereabouts a moment ago. Isn't this his dance?"

The fan in Fairer-than-a-Fairy's hand trembled ever so slightly. "I believe it is," she answered.

"Well?" said the Princess steadily.

Fairer-than-a-Fairy rose, bestowed a smile upon Annesley and a magnificent curtsy upon the Princess, caught up her train, and passed out.

"Sit down," said the Princess condescendingly. "I want to speak to you.

"It's about the question you put to me the other day," she continued. "I've been thinking it over, and have come to the conclusion that you are not bound in any way to do the particular thing you mentioned. You haven't done it?" she added as though by an afterthought.

"No; not yet. But I can't see it in any different light. Why should I?"

"Oh, it is quite simple. Blanche-Rose and I know each other pretty well. She isn't the least bit in love with you—so there."

Annesley's furrowed brow smoothed itself out; then he frowned again.

"Maybe not," he admitted. "But there are some other things to be considered. She has been talked about, you know, and a girl in her position has everything to lose. It seems to me that I am still in honor bound——"

The Princess stamped her foot just a trifle impatiently. "Nonsense!" she said.

Mr. Annesley looked abashed but determined. "I know I'm very stupid," he pleaded. "I don't know how to express it decently, but I—er—really think that she had quite come to expect it. Not that I don't appreciate your interest in the matter," he added quickly. "It's awfully good of you."

The Princess reflected. The Paragon was surely very dense, for a paragon. But she had already taken one step down the glass mountain, with entire dignity; she could certainly venture a little further—far enough to let him understand.

"She doesn't expect it now," explained the Princess, with astonishing patience. "Believe me that I am speaking quite the truth. Besides, I have it in my power to make it up to her—it will be perfectly satisfactory."

Annesley looked grateful but provokingly unconvinced. "I don't exactly follow you," he said.

The Princess felt that the glass mountain was getting curiously slippery under her feet. But she had gone too far now to retreat.

"I'll have to tell you, then," she began. She stopped and hesitated; then went on firmly.

"You'll think it horrid of me, but loyalty to sex is not accounted a feminine virtue, and I may as well take advantage of the fact. It began by way of a joke and then it went on and on. But listen," and forthwith the Princess set out, at length, the varied circumstances leading up to the uncomfortable situation now awaiting resolution. She told everything, be it clearly understood—everything. "Now!" she concluded triumphantly.

The Paragon was really not more stupid than the vast majority of his sex, and a pretty decided glimmering of the truth had suddenly dawned upon him. And with it an even more remarkable inspiration. He realized that the Truly Princess had gone a great way, a tremendous distance indeed; but she was still on her glass mountain. If he yielded now she would instantly repent; in the twinkling of an eye she would be back on her cold, inaccessible summit, and he would be no whit better off than before. Painful as the ordeal might prove, it would have to be passed; she must come not part, but all the way.

Annesley stood up. He looked what he was—a sincere and gallant gentleman, but invincibly short-sighted and thick-headed.

"I can't see that the case is materially altered," he said slowly. "Granted that I have been a victim, can I turn around and make her one? A man can't save himself at a woman's expense. You, yourself, could not permit it."

"But I do. I insist upon it."

"Indeed! And by what right?"

"Because, then." This in a wonderfully weak tone for a Truly Princess.

"That is an insufficient reason. Why?"

"I can't give any other."

"You will."

"No."

Annesley rose deliberately; it was perfectly evident that he was about to walk straight out of the alcove. The music had suddenly stopped and in the indefinite background someone's laughterrangout—Fairer-than-a-Fairy. The Princess grew white, gave a little gasp, and then tumbled squarely off her glass mountain—slipping, sliding, ricochetting to the very bottom of its cold and polished slope. She ran and put one hand on Annesley's arm.

"Why?" he asked, and this was the last time, as both of them knew.

"Because I want you myself," said the Truly Princess.

So it was over and done and the

Princess had left the glass mountain forever. But she never once thought of regretting the change; it was far too comfortable and satisfying down in this Happy Valley, where the sun shone warm, and the bluebells rang continuously, and the green grass grew all around.

Fairer-than-a-Fairy came to the wedding, and her sables were the admiration of all beholders. The Eldest Sister was not present; she had been

obliged to sail for the other side that very morning. But, of course, she sent a wedding gift.

"What was it?" inquired Blanche-Rose. "A lemon-squeezer?"

"Oh, no," answered the Princess innocently. "Something or other in silver."

Fairer-than-a-Fairy smiled, but said nothing more. A Truly Princess is not supposed to possess a sense of humor, and anyway it does not matter, for she was happy enough without it.



## THE PRISONERS

By Theodosia Garrison

THAT which we were forever stands between  
 Ourselves and that we would be. With frail hands,  
 Cold upon either's wrist an old year stands  
 And holds us prisoners for what has been;  
 And pitiful her eyes that needs must screen  
 Our restless eyes that turn toward unseen lands  
 And strange new days, and all the heart's demands  
 Falter and fail before her wistful mien.

Surely we need but little strength to break  
 This feeble hold and turn and wander free,  
 Each one his separate way beyond her door;  
 Strange that we stand here sullenly for sake  
 Of that brief joy she gave to you and me  
 Ere Love went weeping to return no more.



## REAL SORROW

"I UNDERSTAND that Buzzer expressed great regret when his automobile hit that woman the other day."  
 "Yes, indeed. He broke one of his new brass lamps."

# THE WOMAN DAVVISON MET

By Edwin L. Sabin

**S**TANDING hesitantly at the curbing, before crossing the street intersection, a block from the station where the train had landed him for the moment, undecided, Davvison let his right forefinger stray meditatively along his left cheek, close against the nose; on the very instant an automobile swept diagonally toward him, halted before him, and a most charming woman, its passenger, smiled, with the least elevation of even brows, and by a slight movement evidently indicated that he was to occupy the seat beside her.

While the invitation was deftly extended, in it was an element of the imperative.

"I beg your pardon?" stammered Davvison interrogatively, lifting his hat. She certainly had mistaken him for another man. He never had seen her before—no. Or had he? He must be careful, for perhaps he had—somewhere.

"Quick!" she spoke; and the word was a command.

Davvison promptly stepped in, for he was a stranger in the city, he was young, and he was adventurous; and the woman was well gowned, apparently well-bred and undeniably well featured. Indeed, she was a beauty, of the darkly tinted, flashing kind ripened to perfection.

"You arrived on the dot," she volunteered as they were whirled away.

"Yes; the train pulled in just on time," he responded. "May I ask for whom you are taking me?" was in his throat, but there stuck.

As said, he was young, a stranger in the great city, and adventurous. No

one depended upon him nor supervised his actions. He was an independent unit. Various stories which he had read—he remembered one in particular, by Robert Chambers—of mistaken identity whereby man and woman meet, with decidedly happy results following upon the dénouement (they marry, don't they—the two?), flowed through his mind. Here he was, actually participating in such a story!

And if it was *not* a case of mistaken identity; if she was remembering and he had forgotten—whew! His offense, should it be found out, would be unpardonable.

However, "This is an unexpected treat: you, and a machine," he ventured cautiously.

"Yes," she murmured—but he could feel that out from ostensibly careless lids she was eying him sharply. "I suppose that you could not foretell. You only came." Abruptly she softened; and half turning, slightly leaning, she laid a slim, gloved hand upon his knee. "It *is* bewildering, is it not?" she agreed compassionately. "But later you will know all—the why and the what. So be content."

And at the touch of that hand, at the tone of that voice, at the subtle tenderness with which she enveloped him, Davvison surrendered to her; surrendered heart, body and soul.

'Twas now to him a page of the Arabian Nights' Entertainments, somehow slipped into, among the pages of a nineteenth century city. He yielded to the romance; and defiantly challenged the outcome.

The machine (a two-seated tonneau body adapted to runabout activity)

had been forging steadily on, through the crowded thoroughfare; now delayed by vehicles before, now deftly eluding and hastening, until finally it turned into a boulevard and with speed increased, as if relieved, spun along over the smooth asphalt.

At the curb before the entrance to a smart apartment-house the machine came to a standstill. Being upon the walk side, the woman alighted first. With a smile she awaited Davvison, and he also alighted.

"I will telephone when I want you again," she said to the chauffeur. He touched his cap; the machine bore him on.

"This way, please," prompted the woman to Davvison. Together they entered the vestibule of the building; and although she had smiled her frank, winning smile, as she had spoken to him, Davvison was imbued with the sensation that she held him under supervision; that she conducted, rather than accompanied. At the second floor the elevator stopped, and they stepped out.

The elevator descended. Almost as if to the pressure of the electric button set in the wall beside it the door before which they stood opened. They passed within, and the door closed behind them.

Davvison found himself in the conventional dusky reception-hall of a city apartment. Beyond, however, was the more cheery living-room, and following his conductor he proceeded there. She turned upon him with her smile.

"Welcome," she said. She removed her hat.

The man who had admitted them stood in the entranceway from the reception-hall, viewing. Presumably a servant, he was squat and stolid, with the high cheek-bones and the slanting eyes of an Asiatic. Davvison took him for a Japanese. He wore a short house-coat.

"It is he?" queried the man.

"This is he," replied the woman.

He surveyed Davvison thoroughly.

"That is well," he commented: and

advancing he relieved Davvison of hat and overcoat and retired.

The woman carelessly tossed her own coat and gloves upon the couch, and sinking into a chair motioned Davvison into another.

"It is we two, then?" she remarked—half as an interrogation, half as a simple statement.

Davvison willingly would acknowledge that the association was ideal. He was loth to terminate it—but he must have an explanation, no matter what he risked. Alas, surely there had been a mistake, and he ought to confess while yet he might extricate himself with honor. He flushed.

"Honestly," he blurted, determined, "I haven't the slightest inkling why I am here. My card-case is in my overcoat pocket—but my name is Frank Davvison. You knew it—did you?"

Thus he gave her an opening. However, she only subtly smiled back at him.

"No, names are not mentionable at certain times, you understand," she answered. "The spirit, and not the name, is important, among us. But I may call you Frank—I like Frank—without harm." Indeed she could! The word, from her lips, thrilled him deliciously. "I am—you may call me Vera; that means 'true,' does it not? And Frank means 'free.' 'Truth' and 'freedom' ought to rule triumphant, ought they not? So our little mating, brother, augurs well."

"Mating"? Oh, this *must* be a page from the Arabian Nights!

"Still," persisted Davvison heroically, "I don't understand; as you see."

"No?" she smiled gently. "Of course not. Here—" and suddenly reaching, from her seat, she fingered the fold of the chintz covering on the front of the couch, extracted apparently from a slit therein a bit of paper resembling a bank cheque, and proffered it to Davvison. He took it. The face of it was type-written. He read:

You will instantly pay to the one who presents this \$1,000 in gold certificates. The person next in line has in that satchel a

high explosive. If the \$1,000 is not paid without demur, the satchel will be dropped. Do not doubt that this will be done; the effect will be on record, for next time. The amount asked is purposely made small; the satchel will kill all within the room; you have this slip as your warrant. The money is for a needy, righteous cause; not for self-gratification. Pay it in ordinary way. Do not make a single suspicious motion or leave the cage.

Davvison read it again.

"It's our message to the paying teller," explained the woman. "I present it, you carry the satchel. Is it well worded? Have you any suggestions?"

His look of utter astonishment, and puzzled, struggling inquiry, must have appealed to her, for she laughed merrily. Then she sobered.

"Poor boy! And you have been told nothing. No, that was best. You were chosen, and you came. But now you begin to see, do you not? You and I are to collect one thousand dollars for the Cause."

Humph! Davvison read the slip once more.

"Very good," he commented. "All right. Where's my satchel?" He stood, as if ready to start. "We'd better get there before the bank closes."

If there was a joke, he would bluff it right through. She should not have the laugh—charming though that laugh proved—on him.

"What bank?" he added quizzically.

"A bank—and not today," she corrected. "More, we shall know later. So sit down again. Yet like you I am eager to start at once. We are equally zealous, you and I. Only, we must wait; that is part of our work—waiting."

"But I don't want to wait," retorted Davvison doggedly. "I want to perform our little act, and have it over with. Then—we can go to dinner!"

"It is a little act, in comparison with what one is willing to do, isn't it!" agreed the woman. "But please sit down. We will be notified. How old are you, brother?"

Rebuked—at any rate, taken aback—by her manner, Davvison reseated himself.

"I? How old would you think me?"

"Thirty?"

He shook his head.

"Thirty-one!"

He laughed.

"You might stop there," he said.

"And I am twenty-eight," she informed gravely. "Our ages correspond. We are comrades indeed. We have been well chosen."

"I am satisfied," he announced with meaning emphasis.

"Thirty-one and twenty-eight, and already selected," she continued, still gravely. Her eyes dwelt, in thought, upon his face; and slowly her oval, mobile countenance was illumined as by some great and sacred joy. She was a girl dreaming, she might have been a Joan of Arc seeing a vision by day. "There are many in the ranks who have lived twice as long and have not been thus honored," she mused rapturously. With abrupt, impetuous movement she left her chair and standing behind him gently smoothed, mother-like, his hair. "Comrade Frank," she murmured.

Stirred inexpressibly—the touch and the voice of her were like a benediction or a consecration—Davvison groped back of him, and finding her free hand, retained it. It was warm and firm, and the fingers responded to his own. Oh, well, if she was crazy (as now he feared) they would be crazy together and he would enjoy the sweetness of it!

"Comrade Vera," he returned unsteadily.

Her hand strayed over his hair, and they remained thus for a minute in silence. Then Davvison resolutely shook himself (so to speak) free from the spell. This must not proceed, he knew, without an explanation. Brusquely he arose and, somewhat giddy, faced her.

"What are we supposed to be, anyway; anarchists?" he demanded, smitten by a sudden thought just as he was about to speak.

"Certainly," she replied, in calm assertion. "What else, comrade?"

"Oh!" gasped Davvison, his flash of intuition confirmed. "That is, you are. But for whom do you take me?"



Her lovely eyes widened; she paled and recoiled a step.

"But you were sent," she accused.

"N-no; I wish I had been—to *you*."

"But you came!"

"Yes, I came. I can't deny that. And so did several hundred others on that train."

"You gave the sign."

"Not that I am aware of."

"The sign?" she repeated; and she demonstrated.

"That!" defended Davvison. "But a man may attempt to scratch his own nose, may he not?"

"And you were on the spot."

"My dear lady," expostulated Davvison, with a smile, "I had merely turned over my baggage to a porter at the station and was trying to find my way to the hotel; and while I was debating the direction you took me in charge. And since then I have been doing my utmost to ascertain, without bungling, if you really knew me or if there had been a mistake."

With her hands hanging by her side, she doubled her fingers and straightened them nervously.

"Do you understand," she said finally, "that because you did not ascertain the truth sooner, your life is practically forfeited?"

Davvison felt himself also paling in turn.

"I'll take my chances," he answered hardily.

"You have taken them—and lost," she declared. "Your chances are not worth—why, you have none. Since you are not the man, knowing what you do you know too much."

"I know you—but that is all that I cannot forget," he hazarded.

She flushed, her eyes softened, then steadied.

"We cannot forget," she said. "I might—because I would want to trust you—"

"You can, forever," he interrupted eagerly.

"But there are others; the man who admitted us when I rang, for instance. He saw you, marked you."

"What became of the other chap—

the actual—er—delegate, do you suppose?"

"Things happen," she replied laconically. "Perhaps he never started; perhaps he never reached here; perhaps—*qui sait?*" she added, with a tinge of fatalism. "Soon or late—things happen to us all."

"What do you intend to do with me?" he demanded.

She smiled somewhat sadly, and shook her head.

"I can do nothing."

"You can do everything," he declared.

It seemed to him that her lip quivered. Her fingers continued to work nervously.

"And *you*," she asserted, "can do so much."

"What?"

She seized upon the question.

"Have you no thought for the suffering? For the million brothers and sisters—yours and mine—who hourly writhe beneath the oppression of wealth and power, and who have no hope save through us who would help? Have you never heard their cries, which, voiced and unvoiced, every instant beat against the hearts of humanity? Oh, you can do so much!"

"For instance?"

"You have the opportunity—one which comes to few," she exclaimed passionately.

"To rob a bank!"

"Do not call it robbery." She stepped swiftly to him, and in her earnestness placed her hands upon his two arms. "Do not call it robbery. 'Tis but restoring to a people what is rightfully theirs, but what they have earned only to possess not. No, it is not robbery. It is not robbery for one foe to pillage the other of spoils. Besides, this is *your* salvation, as well as the salvation of your brothers and sisters yonder—unknown to you but never ungrateful. Think of yourself, also."

"And might I gain something else—more substantial than gratitude—which would make my life more worth the living?" he ventured.

She dropped her hands from his arms

and stepped back. The color mounted high, and higher, and receded again.

"You?" he pressed.

"In spirit—yes; for you are the comrade I would have chosen. I was so glad when you came." She looked full upon him, cloaking her embarrassment with sincerity. "You will always be my dearly loved brother. I will be your sister. More is not permitted. You—understand?"

She blushed, and her eyes fell.

"Vera!" he besought, with ecstatic hope.

"No!" she cried. She spoke with sudden revulsion. "It must not be. I must not lead you. I will find some other way."

With a sad little glance of rebuke she leaned back from the clasp which he essayed. At that moment the pseudo servant shuffled through the hall and entered.

"If the brother would like to rest before dining, I will show him a room," he suggested, with quiet significance.

Presently (the door having been softly locked behind him) in the small side-room to which he had been conducted Davvison took stock. But the one window faced only a sheer expanse, with the street far below, and with trees screening even that. Uneasy upon the single bed Davvison tossed and pondered.

His heart was afire for the woman. He was of the temperament that will put love before all else. Moreover, it must be remembered that he was young, of independent existence, and adventurous; with Vera's eyes, her voice, her touch, dominating him under the stress of his thoughts he fell asleep.

A knock upon the door aroused him. The pseudo servant announced dinner. Thereupon Davvison washed, and did his best to freshen his attire. The room was supplied with masculine toilet articles.

The woman had been enabled to do more than he; she had changed her garb completely, and was clothed all in vivid scarlet, feet to head; the color accentuated the perfection of her rich black-and-white beauty, but failed to put a

tinge into her cheeks. She was pallid, and the appealing smile of sadness which had been upon her lips when he had left her appeared in her greeting.

They dined, with few words, for the servant hovered about.

In the front room once more they sat in twilight, while Davvison wondered. The servant was clearing away the dishes.

"Listen," she bade, after a moment. "Will you let me save your life?"

"If you will keep it," he answered.

"May I ask you to—to sit nearer?" she faltered.

"At your feet," he said, placing a hassock by her and himself upon it.

She let her hand rest lightly upon his shoulder, and when he grasped it she did not object. Yet he knew that he must not presume, from the privilege.

"The project must be carried through. It must," she reiterated, as he winced. "But there will be no bloodshed. Believe me. We never—we never have been forced to use the bomb, in a case like this. The amount asked for is so small, the consequences of refusal so dreadful. Oh, I shudder, as much as you, at a bomb. And perhaps"—she leaned, with her lips at his ear, her breath perfuming his cheek—"the satchel will not contain explosive. I may be able to arrange it—that way. I will try."

"To hold up a bank!" he muttered, disconsolate.

"But this is an act sanctioned by law; by the higher law," she insisted obstinately. "What is taken from the one is returned to the other whose it is. You will have the consciousness that what you have done is nobly done, and you will ever be my comrade, loved as a brother—loved," she added softly, "if possible, even more."

They were silent a moment.

"Don't you see," she resumed, her hand still in his, "that I want to save you? And to save myself?"

"Yourself!" He was instantly alert.

"Certainly. I put myself last. We are taught never to think of self. Only, I should like to live, to accomplish something. Then I would die gladly.

To save myself, now, I could betray you; but to save us both there is only the one way. We are watched as closely as if this building were glass; and we will be watched until what has been ordered of us is accomplished and we are proved. If you are suspected, if you diverge one iota from the moment when you stood upon the curb until the mission entrusted to us has been performed, you are condemned, and you can *not* evade the penalty. Oh, I know. If by any chance this affair results in *your* apprehension, you may as truly plead coercion and helplessness as though a cocked revolver had been pressed behind your ear. You and the paying-teller will have the same defense. And if I live, brother, I will see to it that your defense is made good. I promise you."

She raised his hand, about her own, and kissed it. At that, all the deviltry of his nature set ablaze, Davvison vowed. Yes, he would have vowed away his very soul, had that been required. He did not care.

His blood had cooled, by morning; but he had devised no method of evasion. 'Twas half-past eight o'clock when he was released from his room, and after breakfast he found himself being conducted in the usual unostentatious but firm manner to a closed carriage which was waiting before the building.

Vera entered it, and the pseudo servant motioned to him to enter also, and followed. The servant bore a small black valise, which Davvison constantly saw even when not looking at it. However, it contained only sawdust—didn't it? He and Vera had not been given a chance to speak in private, either at breakfast or since; but at sight of the valise he had been enabled covertly to jerk his head, indicative, and lift his brows in mute inquiry; and she had winked both eyes, smiling, and had hastily nodded.

They sat in the one seat, the pretended servant in the opposite. Davvison discovered her hand, down between them—and it seemed to him that

in its responsive clasp was reassurance. The carriage rolled on.

No word was spoken. No word was spoken when the carriage stopped and they left it. No word was spoken when at the bottom of the short ascent of marble steps leading up to the bank into Davvison's fingers was pressed the handle of the valise; and with Vera before and the man in the rear he was impelled to proceed—impelled by mental rather than by any physical force.

A wild notion seized him, suddenly to spring aside and shout for help; but the presence of the woman, so close to him, deterred. To rescue himself would be to denounce her—and to deliver her to what fate? He did not consider the vengeance which might, and which probably would, descend upon him; but this woman, of whose eyes, of whose heart, he deemed, he had drunk, who doubtless was as helpless in her environments, even self-imposed, as now was he—he could not betray her. From such an act he revolted. He loved her.

He would see the affair through. Some other solution would be offered. 'Twas hard for him to realize that he was about to be a bank-robber; he, Frank Davvison.

This, the bank's counting-room, was not extensive, although solidly and tastefully furnished. The business of the day was just beginning, and in front of the paying-teller's window were some half-dozen persons. In line, with Vera before him and retreat closed by other customers (the servant had dropped back, at the door), Davvison experienced a growing curiosity as to what would happen. A sense of elation strangely possessed him. He was breathing short and quick, his knees shook, he frequently moistened his lips; but amidst all his tremor from nervousness he nevertheless was being pricked by a certain pleasurable excitement. He caught himself chuckling because the bag was such a fake—containing only sawdust. The teller would be chagrined, if ever he found out. Davvison planned an anonymous

note, telling him. The joke would be too good to keep. Yes, 'twas only a joke—an opera bouffe. If their bluff was called, he hoped that the bank would appreciate, and laugh.

Ah, Vera was passing the slip of paper, which resembled a cheque, under the grating of the window. The teller was reading it—knitting his forehead—flushing red—looking up from it suspiciously, to peer out. Davvison felt that this was his cue, as a super in the play, to wriggle his valise. So he did, answering the look boldly.

The teller's florid hue faded to a grayish. Methodically he took from a compartment beneath the counter a package of bills. He unpinned a band; carefully placed the pin aside; slowly counted off—pausing at each bill to moisten his fingers on the sponge.

*How slowly!* Davvison impatiently shuffled; the line behind him shuffled. But at the window Vera stood, not moving, calmly waiting.

Having counted once, the teller read the slip again. Deliberately he proceeded to recount. It flashed into Davvison's mind that the man was delaying, with purpose.

"That is correct, is it not?" prompted Vera sweetly.

Without a word the teller passed the bills out. Coolly folding them, Vera turned away.

"That is all," she said casually, to Davvison. "I did not have to call on you, you see."

He, also, turned aside. It had been easy, had it not! So easy, 'twas difficult to comprehend that he had participated in a crime.

Then events occurred very swiftly. Through the vestibuled entrance and exit of the bank jostled, hurrying and important, two burly men with the unmistakable bearing of plain-clothes officers upon urgent business. As by premonition, alarm communicating instantaneously from one to another, the people in the counting-room recoiled, scattered. The teller pointed, speaking incoherently; his words were lost amidst the confusion. Only his gesture was interpreted. The officers sprang for-

ward, their eyes upon the valise. They stopped, and with revolvers leveled commanded. Women screamed, men shouted, all was hubbub. Suddenly the valise in Davvison's hand had become the central object.

Instinctively he threw his arm about the woman while, backed into an angle formed by the inwardly projecting vestibule, they fronted together the glaring, angry faces.

"Look out! Look out!" besought the teller, imploring the officers.

"Thieves! Help!" shrieked a woman shrilly and incessantly.

"Hands up!" ordered the officers. "Up with 'em, quick!"

"Don't shoot!" warned Davvison, flourishing the bag. If he could make them understand—if he and the teller could make them understand, by the intimidation of that valise he might be able to land Vera outside and hold back pursuit until she was safe from it. "Look out!" he repeated, with the teller; "dynamite!"

Even as he spoke a heavy glass paperweight, hurled by a frantic clerk from behind the partitioning counter, grazed his face, and thudded against the shoulder of his companion. He heard a sharp crack as of breaking bone.

"Oh," she gasped, swaying.

A berserker rage filled him. He lifted the valise and swung it threateningly. Something of his hot desire must have announced itself to the woman.

"No, no!" she protested vehemently, throwing herself upon his breast, covering his body with her own.

He had not intended to let loose; he had not intended relinquishing his weapon and thus showing its impotency; but as he held high his hand, a revolver bullet pierced his wrist, and propelled forward the valise left his grasp.

The teller and his associates upon either side ducked below their barrier—prairie-dogs could not more abruptly have disappeared; flat to floor sprawled the two officers, and the people imitated or lurched blindly right and left;

stricken, all, in advance. Even while sprawling one of the officers fired—the spiteful report of his revolver sounding clear. The woman clinging to Davvison started and shuddered, with intake of breath; and clung the closer. Noting everything, as in a kaleidoscopic dream, Davvison saw the valise strike the edge of a counter, hang on an instant, and fall back to the tiling—and then a solid wave of air smote him, hurled him like a straw, plunging him down, down, through clangor and blackness.

Soaring up, and up, and up, with increasing swiftness, from the bottomless depths of that well where he had ruthlessly been submerged, with a shock Davvison reached the light. However, he did not come out into the bank; he came out into a reclining-chair, and a woman in a white cap and with blue-and-white striped sleeves was attentively watching him.

"Hello," he said. And he discovered that his right arm was in a sling and that his head was bandaged turban-like.

He must be at a hospital; the atmosphere had that tinge, reminiscent of iodoform and carbolic acid.

The nurse smiled upon him, and raised the chair-back to near the perpendicular.

"See if you can get up, please," she bade. "You've been sent for."

He stood, for a moment giddy, then rapidly stable again.

"This way, please."

They proceeded along a rubber-deadened corridor and turned aside into a doorway. The room beyond contained several men—among them a captain and a sergeant of police, by their uniform.

Forming the background was a

white bed, with a white-robed surgeon standing over it; in the white bed was Vera, her face as white as the sheet beneath the chin, turned expectantly toward Davvison as he advanced. Her eyes were very large and bright.

"This is the man, is it?" queried the police captain.

"It is," she replied faintly.

"She wants to speak with you," explained the captain to Davvison; and he, and all except the white-robed surgeon, whose hand was beneath the covers, the fingers upon a pulse there, seemed to withdraw slightly, as if making space.

Davvison bent to the face.

"Comrade!" she whispered, and she kissed him on the mouth. "Forgive me."

"Vera!" he stammered.

"I have told. It is understood. You could not help—being with me—and you did not mean—you did not know."

She died soon after.

A hard fight was made before the presiding magistrate, but eventually Davvison was released. His standing was proved; the woman's statement in a measure exonerated him, and providentially the explosion had injured seriously only her. Of course whatever damages were assessed Davvison readily paid.

You may remember about the affair in the bank, and the trial, as briefly cabled throughout the world at the time.

He is living today in Paris, Davvison is; he has changed his name, and has altered his personal aspect. However, there is a scar high on his forehead and his right wrist is stiff. He has never married.



# THE OTA JUG

By Austin Adams

I DON'T know how much truth there is in the accepted tradition that a murderer will sooner or later revisit the scene of his crime. It is certain, however, that cats come back, be they treated never so ill, and it's dollars to doughnuts that an old hand, discharged however unjustly, will prowl about the old place from time to time till he dies. And if a man voluntarily resigns a post occupied for any length of time, swearing he'll never go near the detested prison again, you may count upon finding him right there at any time during the balance of his life. Association will draw one back to the well-worn groove as the sparks fly upward. That's why no American can retire from business and live long. Also that's the reason why our so-called civilization endures and there are so few divorces. Men are essentially slaves—of habit; we miss the familiar chains, hug the accustomed, and shiver naked in the bewildering wind of change.

It was the caviar that did the trick for me—the genuine, oily, toothsome Russian caviar that one can get nowhere in New York but at old Pietro's, the dingy and smelly basement restaurant where we newspaper men used to meet at two o'clock in the morning. After ten years of nerve-racking work as all-around "feature" expert on the *Morning Post*—the strenuous yellow journal that has the record for paying men better and killing them quicker than any paper printed—I suddenly resigned. I was getting my eight thousand a year, and the cubs thought I must be crazy to quit, especially as my work had in it as much exciting va-

riety and unexpectedness as a volcano in active eruption. But I had laid by a snug little fortune: I am nearer forty than twenty; I was sick of the infernal wallowing in lush sensationalism; and, of course, like every other newspaper man, I had a gnawing ambition to "write something great."

So I quit. I am conceited enough to imagine that my sudden determination was a staggering blow to the chief, and that it would be next to impossible to fill my place. This feeling oddly enough gave me added zest to the wicked joy with which I laid my resignation on his desk. And I rubbed it in. I announced my intention to devote myself to Literature—I pronounced it with a capital "L"—and took the occasion—the only one a hired man has—to give him and the whole outfit a piece of my mind on the general subject of rotten journalism. To the "boys" I bade farewell in a pathetic little speech not free from a note of patronizing sympathy, and begged them to have me arrested as a lunatic if they ever caught me within a mile of Newspaper Row again. I was through, I told them, and the howling rabble of madmen in ink-bespattered shirt-sleeves would see my face no more. Then I was shot down to the street in the elevator and dived into the underground—free!

Before the early Bronx express reached the next station I began to realize that I was hungry, and I got out, crossed over to the downtown side, and in ten minutes I was back among the Old Guard already gathering at Pietro's. Under the control of some fatal influence I ordered caviar—and the game

was on. As I munched the savory Russian delicacy my mind naturally turned to Russia and, by an equally natural association of ideas, to Japan. Japan! The papers were full of Japan just then. The *Post* that very morning predicted war in a double-leaded column editorial. The Associated Press despatches revealed the ugly state of mind of the Tokio press. The Japanese ambassador was to be recalled; Dai Nippon was bent upon extorting from the United States rights for her subjects enjoyed by all other foreigners in America; and as sure as taxes there would be something doing on the Pacific before Uncle Sam knew what had hit him. Much troubled thought, therefore, came of my munching that delicious caviar that morning at Pietro's.

In the grip of the imp of What Was To Be I ordered another quartet of toast triangles sprinkled over with the sturgeon roe, and as I squeezed the lemon and shook the paprika on them I gave myself over to yearnings for the Japan of Lafcadio Hearn. Nor were these yearnings new to me. Far from it! As long as I can remember Japan had woven about my soul a mystic web of seductive desire to see her and know her. I had been to Japan, but as a harassed and mercenary newspaper correspondent—hence totally blind to whatever signifies. I had written articles for my paper that made a hit; I was looked upon among the craft as an authority on Japanese matters; I was on rather intimate terms with several influential Nipponese both in Tokio and Washington. But of the real Japan, of the heart of the East, of whatever it was that had always peered out at me through the veil of the Orient to madden me with a thirst for I knew not what—of all this I had only desire, not knowledge. And every mouthful of that fateful caviar increased my thirst for the nameless something that my empty life lacked, deepened my need of a vague satisfaction.

And now at last I was free, free to set out on the long-deferred quest of—what?

"Why, hello, old man!" exclaimed Morley of the *Times*, hurling a javelin of French stick bread at me. "I hear you've reformed. Congratulations!"

I shook his hand and moved into the chair next the wall to make room for him at my table.

"Yes," I said. "About time, isn't it?"

"What paper has captured you now?"

"Paper?" I cried with disgust. "I've become respectable—for keeps!"

"They all say that."

"But I mean it."

"Rats!"

"No; I'm done—honestly."

"Are you serious?"

"Ask the chief."

A man of few words but rapid-fire decisions, Morley looked at me in puzzled silence for a moment, and then jumped up and grabbed me by the lapel of my coat. I had a dim intimation of danger, but was powerless to resist. For the instant, he seemed in some mysterious way to be in conspiracy with the caviar, and in quite the most illogical fever of intuitive anticipation I felt that his sudden move had in it some undefined connection with Japan.

"Come," he said, "the Old Man doesn't leave until after three. I want you to see him. The chance of your life!"

We rushed out of the restaurant and down to the Row. The City Hall clock said quarter-past three. Mobs of newsboys swarmed about the press-room doors, while other mobs of men in flannel shirts tossed bundles of papers into the caravan of wagons backed against the curbs. Tired old chaps made their way toward the Bridge and the subway, and wiry, dissipated young men rolled cigarettes as they strolled in twos and threes to near-by saloons. The tang of the old trade was in my nostrils; the clutch of the maddest life men know about my will, habit-caloused. I almost envied the ragamuffin who sold me a "poiper." He was a part of the mighty machine of News. Morley and the caviar needed



nothing more than the noises and sights of Newspaper Row to prepare me to do their bidding. Through these strenuous notes of the West the Orient was secretly working her spell over me.

It was actual joy to be lifted skyward in the hurry elevator to the Old Man's sanctum on the top floor; rapture to pass through the "city" room, where twoscore of my late comrades of the press were in the last stages of delirious haste, the crucial instant when hopeless chaos miraculously and suddenly settles into the form and fitness of "make-up," electrotyped, fixed, orderly and balanced as the cosmos. That is the wonder which, like the blessings of the Lord, is new every morning. And my soul felt it all and was homesick. We caught the Old Man just as he was leaving; but he seemed more than glad to see me, when Morley told him that I was out of a job.

"You have, as I am informed, been an all-around man," said the Old Man as we three sat down. "You understand everything about a newspaper?"

"Everything," I replied, "except, of course, why anybody pays any attention to what they see in it."

"Precisely—though just now, if you please, we won't go into that," laughed the Old Man, with just enough starch in his voice to warn me not to forget the dignity that doth hedge about an editor-in-chief.

"You know a good deal also, do you not, of the personnel of the press in Tokio and Yokohama?" he went on, his apparently abrupt reference to Japan in no wise surprising me. I knew he must speak of Japan; it was written in the stars that night.

"Why, yes," I answered, "I spent whole months in the Tokio Press Club, you know, sir, waiting daily for the smiling official liar to come and tell us that we could certainly go to the front the next day."

"I read your very remarkable letters," he said; and I forgave him his lack of appreciation of humor. "We need a man in Japan at once," he continued, even as the caviar had foretold, "and if you can sail on the *Iyu*

*Maru* from Seattle a week from today, we would think this newspaper fortunate."

"I'll go," I said—what else could I say?

"Thank you! Come in, please, and see me this evening about eight o'clock."

So there I was back in the harness, after having been out of it—forever!—for exactly an hour and forty-five minutes. But, then, when I swore off I hadn't dreamed that Japan would reach out to pull me back by means of old Pietro's sturgeon roe. However, a feeling of positive relief came over me as the said harness fell into place. Park Row looked my old Row again when I walked up to the station, not the haunted place it had seemed only an hour before, filled with the echoes of ten years' doing and daring. And then, too, beyond and beneath the thrill of the new mission of opportunity and professional excitement lay the elusive feeling that—somehow, no matter how—this voyage was to end in the slaking of the life-thirst, the filling full of the cup of spiritual and intellectual desire. Not for an instant, not even in the first flush of decision, did I feel that this was to be merely one more added to my long list of newspaper adventures. Back from Japan I would never come more, never, that is to say, the drifting and unsatisfied dreamer that I had always been. The veil of a life's mystery of need would some way be lifted in the far country of my heart's desire; out of the turgid torrent of professional endeavor would rise the vision beautiful of a soul at peace. Yes, I could afford this one more offering to the lying Baal of the Press, since out of it was to come the secret of music's self and the Riddle's answer.

Promptly at the hour named I was closeted with the Old Man. In twenty minutes I had got from him the essence of my commission—one that would have made my blood tingle with professional impatience a year ago, yes, or last month or last week. I was to slip into Japan as a private tourist, sound politicians and publicists, size up the

situation, and, in short, discover just how much genuine international menace there was in the anti-American agitation, and how much mere Japanese party politics. In my state of mind at that time, however, I looked upon the sudden turn in my affairs as the long awaited "way out"—to satisfaction.

I was in Washington early the next morning and had no difficulty in getting the ear of certain important personages at the State Department, the Japanese embassy, and, of course, the White House. In five days I was in Seattle and the next morning, on the hurricane deck of the *Iyu Maru*, I watched the snow-capped peaks of the Cascades and the Olympics as we steamed out of Puget Sound. My wire had secured me a berth but not a state-room to myself, and when I went below to get ready for luncheon I hoped that I might meet the man with whom I was to live in a four-by-seven cubby-hole for ten or twelve days. And I did.

He was a smartly dressed little old gentleman, a literary man, if I could guess right, or perhaps a retired business man with a taste for art and travel. He was sitting on the edge of his bunk reading, and smiled affably as I came in.

I took to him at once and thanked my stars that I had escaped a bumptious drummer or a missionary or a callow young millionaire starting out to "do" the Orient. The old gentleman's first words made me start.

"You've chosen a rather bad time to visit Japan," he said, adding after studying me for a moment, "unless my first estimate of you was false. Maybe you are not the bored American tourist you look to be?"

"On the contrary," I laughed, "I am returning to Japan because—because—well, because I can't keep away from it. And you, sir?"

For answer he rose and grasped both my hands. Then he dived down into a small hand-bag and got out a card-case. He handed me his card with a bow.

Mr. Waldo Higginson,  
Expert Appraiser,  
Oriental Art Guild,  
London and Tokio.

"I'm delighted, sir, to meet you," I said truthfully, after reading his card and handing him mine.

"Do you go in for Japanese art?" he asked, the phrase and the accent revealing him English and cultured.

"Alas! no—unless in my total ignorance of just what it is that fascinates me in Japan I have been unconsciously artistic in my taste—my thirst, I would better call it!—for all things Japanese."

He looked at me curiously before speaking.

"Thirst, eh?" he murmured, as if to himself, and then put a kind old hand on either of my shoulders. "At your age—I take you to be at least thirty-two or three—thirst is a serious word. It implies one of two things: either you have drained without satisfaction the cup which our shallow Western world finds quite sufficient, or else life is to you too deep and full of mystery to be satisfied by anything less profoundly and eternally true than the wisdom of the East. If I may do so without impertinence, my young friend, I judge the latter supposition is correct."

"Oh, you mustn't take me so seriously as all that, sir! I don't myself! I confess, however, that as long as I can recall anything in the way of emotional and spiritual craving, Japan has seemed to me to be the land of—what shall I say?—the land of——"

"Of lies!" he broke in, laying hold of me and surprising me by his unaccountable warmth. "Lies, sir, lies! Take its pottery, for example! Beautiful, yes, God knows how altogether too lovely, frequently, is one of those old jars! But behind its beauty of exquisite form and unguessed and haunting color lurks and leers the fatal spirit of Nippon—that fatalistic strain in Japanese character which flings away a human life as something utterly worthless and worships only the naked abstractions of racial pride. Ethics there cannot be in a land whose art is

so brutally, so frankly, so intoxicatingly sensual. And if you have ever known a Japanese woman of culture and wit and artistic temperament you will understand what I mean when I say that her lure is the lure of the siren; she inflames only to ruin and laugh."

The old gentleman was indeed a treasure! I foresaw no end of joy in this voyage. Moreover, with an undefined sense of impending danger, I welcomed this unexpected friendship—just why, I couldn't have said. He knew Japan; he had evidently felt the fascination of the East; though I didn't altogether like his attitude of scornful rejection of the lying spirit of Nippon. I nodded for him to go on, but the gong sounded and we went into the saloon for luncheon.

A five-dollar gold piece had ensured for me a place at the captain's table, and I found myself seated between Baron Takimatu (whose sailing on that particular steamer was the reason for my doing the same) and an aristocratic-looking young Japanese woman who seemed to be traveling alone, for next to her sat an Englishman with his wife and two daughters. The baron was almost offensively polite and attentive to me, and his incessant chatter about trifling matters kept me from following up the opportunities for getting better acquainted which the Japanese girl seemed always to be giving me. Before lunch was half over, however, I had made up my mind to learn as much as possible about her from others, for her perfect English, her witchery of manner and a certain feeling of novelty in meeting for the first time on anything like terms of intimacy an educated Nipponese woman filled me with the keenest desire to know her better. Furthermore, she lunched principally on—caviar! Old Mr. Higginson sat just opposite, and the old chap seemed to watch me in a way that would have struck me as impertinent had I not come to look upon him as privileged and worth while.

My chance came that very afternoon. Mr. Higginson told me that he was in the habit of taking a nap in the "stupid

time between luncheon and dinner," and asked me to keep as quiet as possible if I came down into our state-room. I took the hint and stayed up on deck. After trying in vain to draw the baron out—I found him suave, entertaining, a gentleman and a liar—I finished my cigar and strolled aft among the ladies who were stretched out in their chairs in the lee of the deckhouse. My Japanese girl was standing alone at the taffrail, looking at the long streamer of foam churned up by the screw. She smiled welcomingly as I came up.

"Do you speak Japanese?" she asked, her soft, hungry eyes commanding me to fetch a couple of camp-stools.

"Alas!" I answered, "my Japanese is nothing like the English of Miss——"

"Call me Sata. It's not my name, but it's what they used to call me before I died."

The cold hard little laugh with which she said this repelled me, but there was no resisting her air of chummy willingness to become confidential.

"Miss Sata's early death has left her a very lively——"

"Not Miss, please; just Sata. But tell me: did you, too, die yet?"

"In one sense—a very deep and awful sense—I fear that I have never lived," I replied, catching, half in sheer devilry and half in dead earnest, her own grim mood of pretty wistfulness and melancholy.

"I can believe you—since you have existed elsewhere than in Nippon."

"I've been in Nippon," I was quick to explain.

"So have I, and so has that little fool," she said, pointing to a diminutive deckhand who was polishing the brasses about the after-skylight. "But only the blest ever find the gate to the real life, the life that maddens us all who see only the Nippon of color and flowers and scents and—oh, you know, you know!"

"Yes," I said, turning to watch the lovely face that she rested upon her folded arms as she laid them on the rail, "I know, I know. But there is a gate—somewhere. This thirst for

what Nippon hints to one's soul must be capable of satisfaction."

"Now we're getting sentimental!" she retorted, with a piquant little toss of her head. "And we'll never be friends at this rate, for sentiment is a hermit and lives always alone—outside the Garden of Dreams, I mean."

"You are traveling alone?" I asked abruptly.

"There's an old Japanese proverb," she replied sitting up and looking not at me, but the sea, "which says that it is questions that sunder friends; so if we are to be friends, there must be no questions asked. Is it agreed?"

"But life itself is a question."

"And that's why you are thirsty and I am traveling alone—through life!"

"But—" I was beginning, when she cut me off.

"What cowards you of the West are! At the gate of heaven itself you will ask for particulars! Oh, for men who, like our sages, will fling themselves over the abyss—to live, to know, to see, to have! I could follow through hell such a man as that! And how glorious would be the search of two *with no doubts between them*, for the spring in the garden whence flows the water of life!"

I don't know what answer I might have groped for—I was already swimming in a dim sea of nameless liking for the woman with her pagan mysticism—had not the approach of an intrusive American tourist forced us to sit farther apart and begin talking about whales. As this is not a love-story I shall not here set down in detail what followed that first strange talk of ours. Suffice it to say that long before we sighted Japan I was as madly, as illogically and as hopelessly in love as a man can be. Every day, while old Mr. Higginson slept away the whole afternoon, Sata and I sat together, talking, in the most delightfully unaffected way, of the deep things of life. Mindful of her old proverb, and by mutual consent, we asked no questions; yet each by degrees revealed to the other the salient features of our past and led up, at last, to as frank and utter a

self-exposure as ever man and woman made to one another.

She was different—God! how different!—from all the women to whom I had ever come near enough to understand. Embittered by some crushing emotional experience (just as I was); craving the hour and the way for that total and irrevocable abandonment which should land her forever at the bottom of the abyss of feeling; scornfully flinging from off her heart one and all of the ineffectual half-loves and half-surrenders prompted by prudence and virtue; maddened by thirst for the something which would quench the pain of desire; and rapturously believing that only in the fatalism and blank effacement of her beloved Nippon could she hope to win to the depths of passion and the heights of knowledge, this marvelous woman led me step by step to the brink of the precipice of absolute Nirvana. I loved her; I desired nothing but to be with her, to possess her forever—in hell or heaven, it mattered not which.

But withal she was exceedingly discreet. At the table she scarcely spoke to me, in the evenings, after dinner, she was nowhere to be seen; and frequently she would stop short in the middle of a sentence and run away, not to let me see her again until the next afternoon. Yet always when we met, if only for an instant in the passage or on the companionway stairs, she said something so unexpected, so deep, so seductive, if you will, that the fever of desire never left my throbbing veins, the thirst for the life which she alone could give me never ceased to parch my soul. And great God! how winsome and innocent and sweet she was withal! How wholly she filled out the dreams of my past!

She, nor I, ever spoke of the end of the voyage, and grew sad over wondering what was to be then. At last, with only one more day left to us, I was forced to realize that the end must come. Yet it could not, must not come, the end! For nearly an hour we sat in our little secret trysting place behind the unused wheel on the after-

deck, each silent and full of bitter and groping thoughts. Suddenly I spoke to her, told her all. Until that moment I had made love to her only by revealing to her the things and the thoughts and the visions that I loved; we were welded into one another by being welded into common confessions of common desires and beliefs. But now I poured forth a mad torrent of passionate and tender appeal. And she laid her little hand in mine and listened.

When I was done she told me. She was the wife of a man whom she hated—but that need not keep us apart. What were man's laws and conventions that they should think to divide the indivisible? She would hide away in a little home—a paradise of flowers and peace, where the world might never find her—far away from Tokio and this death in life. There I would come to her; there we two should find our way to the ALL. And I listened and clutched at the vision of love she painted. On the income of my little nest-egg we could live in comfort; two souls would slip out of the moment's memory of men—and together we two would walk through the flowers and the joy to the edge of the gate of eternal rest.

As all the world knows, when we reached Tokio I found that the little international flurry was past and that, in consequence, there was nothing to do. Anyhow, my plans with Sata required that I resign my commission; so I was not disappointed on finding that I had gone half-way around the world for nothing. I found a cable-gram at my hotel. It was from my paper, directing me to make a thorough investigation of the situation in Japan and then proceed to Korea, thence to Manila, and finally to visit the leading cities in China for the purpose of collecting accurate and exhaustive studies of existing conditions and tendencies. I tore up the message—it contained, too, an offer of a princely salary—and as the bits of paper fluttered to the floor I felt that they symbolized the interests and empty efforts and all the doing and

striving of the wretched life of thirst and aimlessness which had been mine, but which, thank God, was now over and done with. The new life, the real, was to begin that night.

We purposely avoided each other in the general hand-shaking of the passengers, but everything was understood between us. I would take up a formal residence at my hotel, but also I would secure apartments elsewhere, in some of the remote suburbs—I knew them well—and there Sata would come to me on the following night. I found exactly what I wanted; a tiny little bungalow buried in flowering vines and in a village never by any chance visited by foreigners, nor by anybody, for that matter, except the hundred or two natives who came to work in the park of a certain wealthy merchant. Of my little nest I informed Sata, sending the note as she had with great particularity directed me to do, by the hands of a blind messenger who came to me at the hotel.

Early in the evening I made my way out to my new quarters, driving to the edge of the city and then on foot. Sata would not be coming for a good hour yet, but I wished to give the little bower a few finishing touches. As I was arranging some flowers in the sitting-room my eye caught sight of a jug with a note tied to the handle, standing upon a tabouret near the door. The note was from Sata and ran:

"Drink, dear heart! Good-bye!

"SATA."

I stood dazed for a moment, a sickening wonder filling my heart; for the squat, uncanny, fascinatingly ugly jug seemed to exhale the essence of final loss. Presently, however, I shook off my stupid misgivings and lifted the jug. It was full of water. My long walk along the dusty road had made me dry, and as I sipped the delicious cold water I realized that Sata had done this merely for my comfort and that she must surely be hiding somewhere about the garden, for the water could not have been drawn from the well more than a few minutes. I stood just in front of the mirror as I drained

the jug, and as I tipped it up to get the last few drops I saw reflected in the glass a shining gold inscription on the bottom of the jug. Embedded in a little depression, and burned in Chinese characters, the words filled me with unaccountable curiosity. Even after I had set the jug down and gone out into the little garden I could not rid myself of a vague idea that the inscription was more than a trade-mark or the ordinary potter's name and address. Also, on returning into the house, the jug fixed itself more and more uncannily upon my imagination. For over an hour I sat looking at it—and as the twilight deepened into dark its shape seemed to change; now it was a loathsome toad; now a skull; and again the face of Sata grown fiendish, cruel, mocking.

With a loud laugh at my foolish vapors I put an end to the spell. I struck a match and looked at my watch. Sata would be coming at any moment; so I lit the lamp and a fresh cigar and waited. Thinking that I heard something in the alcove, I turned—and saw the tips of waxy fingers slowly pulling aside the bamboo screen which shut off the bedroom. The next moment Sata stood radiant before me. She had discarded European dress and appeared ten-fold more lovely now in a pale rose kimono embroidered over with silver and blue. Her glossy black hair was piled up above her snow-white forehead, the glorious mass transfixed by huge gold pins tipped with sapphires and rubies. In the deep "V" of the front of her kimono I caught the gleam of her breast, and up the wide sag of the sleeves the curve of her outstretched arms. She tottered forward, the click of her high wooden heels like music to me drunk with the new wine of delirious surprise, and I sprang to her and clasped her and held her and claimed her—Japan! Her touch was toxic; I thrilled to it.

While we were still yielding to that never-to-be-repeated rapture of the first embrace I heard footsteps in the garden. Quick as thought Sata slid back into the alcove and closed the screen, while I angrily flung open the

door and called out, demanding who was there. It was Mr. Higginson—of all men, and he came in, rubbing his eyes on stepping into the light.

"You must really pardon me, my dear fellow," he began, "but all during the afternoon I have been unable to throw off the feeling that you were in danger of some sort. I hope this is not the case?"

"Never was better in my life!" I exclaimed with relief on finding that he did not suspect anything. "But how on earth did you ever trace me to my little secret writing place? One has to have some such cloister, you know, if one is to do any real work."

"Yes—of course! How did I find you? I'll tell you because it will prove to you that what I told you of Japanese honor was true. Hashi Matsuko, the blind messenger, betrayed your secret—for five yen! I saw him talking to you at the hotel, and when my feeling of anxiety for your safety became so insistent I approached him—and he instantly offered to sell your confidence for a price! I needn't tell you, I hope, that your privacy will suffer nothing at my hands."

His manner was so genuinely kind that I banished my first feeling of resentment, and I set my mind to work devising some way to get rid of him as soon as possible. While we sat chatting I kept my eye on the jug—and the bamboo screen; and finally I was able to lead the talk away from the subjects suggested by Mr. Higginson and around to pottery in general and the jug in particular.

"Since you, sir, are an expert, won't you tell me if there is not something most singular about this odd-looking jug?"

He put on his glasses and took the jug in his hands.

"I hope you haven't been fooled into paying some ridiculous price for this clever imitation?" he said.

"No, I found it here in this rented house."

"It's one of that old rogue Kosan's cheap Ota fakes," went on Mr. Higginson, warming to his pet theme. "No

doubt you've been to Ota—the suburb of Yokohama, you know, where Kosan has been turning out bogus Satsuma and other faience ware, like this pseudo-art gem here."

"It's hideous enough to be actually fascinating," I replied, "and I confess that in my ignorance of art I might be willing to buy such a jug as this one—for its oddly insidious personality."

"I'm glad to hear you say that!" he exclaimed, "for not everybody knows that every piece of pottery possesses a distinct—well, personality, if you like. It is as if the thought of the potter enters into the plastic clay, and the ovens do but burn in and fix the mind and soul of the potter in the jug or pot."

"This jug has certainly got on my nerves," I laughed. "The potter's mind fills it yet, by Jove! And by the way, Mr. Higginson, would you mind telling me what the inscription on the bottom is? It also seems to have a hidden meaning—for me, that is!"

With a jerk of excited curiosity he turned the jug over and I could see that there was something unusual in the inscription by the way he looked at it. Taking a magnifying-glass from his pocket he examined the gold characters carefully.

"I take it all back," he said. "This jug is a very rare and priceless bit of old Ota ware."

"What does it say?" I asked, with shocking philistine disregard of the artistic question.

He held the jug close to his eyes and read aloud:

"KATSU O TOKI SEI-YO NO SAKE."

"And that means—?" I asked, conscious of coming revelation.

"It means: It is the sake drunk

the morning after intoxication which quenches the thirst."

"And that means what, in plain English?" I asked, after a moment of dizzy silence.

"Why, I suppose it means that it is the cold water of duty bravely faced in the morning, and not the delirium-producing emotional debauch, which can alone satisfy the soul of man—of the clean, sane, self-reliant Anglo-Saxon man, at any rate."

I've forgotten now just how I managed it, but in a few minutes I had started back to the city with Mr. Higginson. Leaving him at the corner of the little lane and the highroad, I returned to say good-bye to Sata, whom I found convulsed with laughter, as cold and hollow as an empty tomb. She jeered at me and frankly confessed that her only regret was that the "little fooling for a day or two" had come too soon to an end. Then I left her. As we drove into town Mr. Higginson expressed regret at being unable to invite me to be his guest while I remained in Tokio.

"The fact is," he said sadly, "that I fell a victim to Japanese dreams some ten years ago. I married a young woman out here—and my home is the last place to which I can take my friends. For certain reasons I have preferred to let matters go on as they are, and very few even know that I have a wife. It was she who sat next you at table on the steamer."

I cabled my paper in the morning that I would accept their offer. Hard work and lots of it is the best thirst quencher—and I keep my smoking tobacco in the Ota jug.





# SORROW SONG

By I. H. Phillips

**I** BREATHED a song in my heart last night,  
And it crept to the ears of the stars,  
And it soared to the soul of the moon whose light  
Fled into its passionate bars.

It clung to the pearl of the silver mist  
As she whispered of love to the sea,  
And it sighed with the wind as he kept sweet tryst  
With the leaves of a murm'ring tree.

It charmed all things, but unheeded lay  
At his feet for whom 'twas sung,  
And then, with the night, it fled away,  
And died in the heart it had rung.



## HIS OPINION,

**P**ENDALLY—Now, candidly, what do you think of my book?

**GRIMSHAW**—Well, I always did admire the courage of a man who, without knowing how to write, writes on a subject of which he knows nothing.



## JUST SO

**“U**NCLE BILL, what is an affinity?”

“Oh, 'most anybody that you are not married to, Willie.”



**W**HERE there's a will there's a won't.

# AS IT TURNS OUT IN REAL LIFE

By Mabel Balcombe

"**T**WENTY-EIGHT, and still hugging ideals!" Mrs. Garst raised eyes and plump shoulders in appeal to the heavens—or, more correctly, to the frescos of her music-room ceiling.

"I always was preposterous," laughed the slender girl in the other chair before the grate-fire.

"But, Evelyn, look at your life! Home and stepmama unendurable; no money; no advantages; as matters stand, no future; talents crushed down, mashed up; nerves prostrate——"

"Minced talent on nerve such as stepmama used to make," began Miss Ross inanely, "to be served——"

"Don't jest now! Here you are, pale, weak, really ill; and your malady is—disordered circumstances, nothing more! but it is as effectual as tubercles—isn't it?—for spoiling a career——"

"Dislocated circumstances and minced nerve would injure any——"

"—and you have sense enough to know that after twenty-seven a woman must have a career or—marry. Poor, ill and an old maid; that does not sound inspir——"

"Please make it 'bachelor girl.'"

"Hush! Listen to me; I'm older than you. I've acknowledged to thirty-seven for lo! these many years."

"Really, Mrs. Garst," with mock compliment, "you don't look a day over——"

"Please, Evelyn, try—just this once—to look at things practically. You are not going to grow younger or better looking; offers of marriage may cease; you can't go on existing on music, or poetry, or disappointed aspirations——"

"Minced talents," interpolated the

scoffer. Miss Ross was never more exasperatingly flippant than when in fear of showing emotion, and just then her head was averted to hide the quick tears that had sprung to her eyes.

Mrs. Garst went patiently on: "Here's a man presentable, good-tempered——"

"Innocuous."

"Rich, ready to change all this; ready to give you a home of your own, luxury, scope, affection—everything of which you stand so sorely in need. Why, why, my obstinate, misguided friend, are you throwing it all away?"

"Because, Margaret," giving way to seriousness, "there is one tragedy in life that I mean to escape."

"Tragedy! By all that's absurd, what tragedy?"

"An unhappy marriage."

"Unhappy! Nonsense! Why should any woman be unhappy with a man like Gilbert Law? He's a gentleman, he loves you——"

"You mean he likes my sharp tongue. He considers that, equipped with the good gowns and jewels he could give me, I would do him credit at the head of his table. In fact, I could live up to the family plate. Whether I had a soul or not would not mat——"

"Well, even were that all, would not the marriage of convenience be an improvement on this soul-eating existence? If he admires you and you like him——"

"*Like!* Oh, Margaret!" The girl's cheeks flushed, her "cold" blue eyes flashed; she rose impulsively and stood over the fire; then, pulling herself together, continued in a quieter tone: "I couldn't *like* the man I married. I'd

love him or I'd *loathe* him. There would be no middle course for me. I've missed everything else in life, dear; don't ask me to give up my small chance for the one real happiness."

Mrs. Garst was surprised at the sudden revelation of the girl's heart—revealed, even to her, for the first time—and shifted to the persuasive with softened tones.

"It wouldn't be as you imagine, Evelyn. You would get used to having him about and grow fond of him, and then——"

"Yes, and then—meet my twin-soul."

"Twin—bless my soul!" and another eloquent appeal was sent heavenward. "Here I've thought all along that I was dealing with the *makings*, at least, of a clever, accomplished woman of the world, and now with her mask off, she's just a little bread-and-butter, Sunday-school-book, archaic heroine, sacrificing all the solid realities of life, all the greatest advantages, for—what? For moonshine. Ye gods! she's looking for the perfect man."

Evelyn smiled at her friend's dramatics and ran to the cover of her own humor. "No," she said, "for when you find the perfect man—he drinks."

"Then a corresponding lunatic. Where in the masculine persuasion do you expect to find such?"

"I'm sure I don't know. Perhaps I'll never find him."

"Yes, there's the rub."

"Well, dear, flattering friend, I'll just have to keep on rubbing."

Evelyn descended to slang and a sardonic grin to escape further discussion of her dismal affairs. Sympathy and understanding such as Mrs. Garst gave her were new in her experience, and upsetting. They made her take off her mask and show her real self, which was a shock to her, the occurrence was so rare. Tenderness and appreciation had never been hers in her home life. Before the advent of her stepmother when she was sixteen the attitude of Stewart Ross toward his daughter had been one of pleasant and absent-minded indifference; since that event it had

gradually changed to one of silent disapproval. Her ideas—had a girl a right to ideas at all?—were the antipodes of those of the woman he had placed in control of her. To the second Mrs. Ross the daily routine of domestic duties was not a means toward living, but the end of living itself; any interests outside it—especially for a woman—a squandering of time. When those foreign pursuits were of an artistic nature—purely ornamental—then the boundary of sin itself was reached. The songs Evelyn sang with exquisite sympathy, the accomplished people she sought, above all, the sort of books she pored over, dead for the time to domestic weal or woe, were the subjects of continual and bitter complaint, the cause of irritation that developed into dislike—the abiding dislike of the older woman for the girl she can neither comprehend nor impress.

The tragedy of Evelyn Ross's life was the great tragedy of little things; the daily grate and grind of the literal and imaginative temperaments together; the quick silencing, by Philistine contempt, of every little pipe of melody that might, in the aspiring nature, have swelled to joyful pæans.

Evelyn grieved over the chasm ever widening between herself and her father, but was too proud to try to bridge it by constant explanations. It was unspeakable loneliness to her world-loving soul to be cut off from the kind of people congenial to her. It was suffering even to face, daily, the wall-papers of her stepmother's choice, that rose in their piebald might and smote her fine sensibilities. She bore it all in silence, but the constant restraint wore on high-strung nerves.

With a sensitive nature placed in a false position, with the zest of life gone, languor, mental and physical, almost conquered her at times. Only the youth left in her, the pleasure she snatched from those execrated books, the relief of pouring out her real feelings in song, saved her from being crushed to melancholy.

In her home she grew more and more silent and aloof; in society she was

animated and witty—too witty and too prone to delicate sarcasm. Her appearances there were but occasional and the impression she created gave her the reputation of being clever, but unsympathetic, and lacking in the softer "womanly" qualities. Well, indeed, was her starved heart concealed beneath a surface that glistened with the bright frost of cynicism and flippancy. It was but one soul in a thousand that recognized through the tones of a song, sometimes, the pulse-throbs of a lonely heart.

Mrs. Garst and her cheery hospitality were the rose-gleam in the girl's gray life. On a visit the Winter before to Chicago, where Evelyn lived, Mrs. Garst had warmed to the girl and had carried her back to Detroit. It was then that Evelyn had met and charmed the estimable Gilbert Law, whose recent proposal to her was the only one she had ever received, that would lift her from meager circumstances and loneliness into the atmosphere where she rightly belonged. Hence Mrs. Garst's concern.

But this was the first afternoon of Evelyn's second visit; she was not yet adjusted to the pleasure of it. The harmony and luxury of her surroundings, as she lay in a soft, deep chair, in a room fire-lighted, hung in rich, warm reds, and fragrant with flowers; and, more than that, such solicitude as that shown by her handsome, amiable hostess—fond in spite of present scoldings—were all too rare in her life; all given too much at once for the poise of her susceptible senses. That frozen thing in her breast warmed and stirred too suddenly, and the first sensations of reviving life were of pain—she wanted to break down and cry.

The arrival of a dozen of Mrs. Garst's friends—invited in for a cup of tea and to meet Evelyn—cleared the air of emotional topics. But Mrs. Garst, while she brewed tea and made things chatty and informal, kept the discussed subject in the back of her mind; and during a Chopin nocturne she had persuaded someone to play on the piano, while she pretended to listen with ec-

static emotion, she made up her mind finally that her project of marrying Evelyn off was the one solution of her problem, and that nothing should deter her from accomplishing it.

"Leave her to her own devices," she reflected, "and she'll allow every opportunity to slip through her fingers, while she pores over Shakespeare or Emerson's Over-Soul. What in heaven's name does a pretty girl want with an over-soul? I wonder what an over-soul is, anyway."

Light-hearted, assured women Mrs. Garst's friends seemed to Evelyn. Whatever their crosses in life had been, they had, at least, leisure and opportunities, and most of them revealed accomplishments, conversational or otherwise. Enormous wistfulness hid behind Evelyn's bright mask as she listened to the well-trained voice of Miss Landon through two brilliant songs; and then to the fairy harmonies that sprang from the piano keys under the magic touch of Mrs. "Will" Gray. She realized the talents she might have developed under good instruction; the joy of life that might have been hers in such surroundings.

Especially were the caprices of Fate borne in upon her when she was introduced to a girl named Miss Verne. Stout and placid was Miss Verne. She added not to the hilarity of nations or tea-tables, and listened with but a slow-comprehending smile to the persiflage of the others. She did not even live up to the costly gown in which fond parents had decked her.

Evelyn tried to animate her with beams of cordiality.

"Your cousin, Miss Landon, sings superbly," she said.

"Yes," answered Miss Verne, without the lift of an eyelash.

"There seem to be so many splendid musicians among the women of Detroit!" Evelyn added enthusiastically.

"Yes," said Miss Verne.

"I am looking forward to the musical at Mrs. Gorden's tonight. I hope I shall meet you there."

"Yes," said Miss Verne, and added a mild, "I hope so."

Evelyn scanned the impassive face, unlined, unilluminated. "No heights, no depths, no history," she inwardly commented. "She is as much out of her element in her circumstances as I in mine. In my place she would not suffer turmoil and rebellion; in hers I—I could grow wings."

Thenceforth the Garst mansion on Jefferson avenue was the scene of numerous festivities. Mrs. Garst said no more of luxuries and bank accounts, but surrounded Evelyn with the men she knew to be blessed with those appurtenances. Evelyn expanded in the unwonted brightness of her life. Her animation was no longer forced; she was entertaining, even considered brilliant. Her *bons mots* often went the rounds of the clubs; she was discussed, conspicuous; but there her triumphs seemed to end—no one fell in love with her. Her badinage was somewhat too pungent for the usual complacent clubman. Before he had known her long he began to suspect that under her frivolity there lurked an intellect, equal if not superior to his own, and budding sentiment took alarm. A high order of intellect in a woman seems a splendid adjunct to her friendships with men, but a sad handicap in her love-affairs—unless she can conceal the traces of it. By the very men who admired her most Evelyn was styled "haughty," "too critical," "clever, but soulless."

Soulless! She certainly was unversed in the expression of sentiment. Her soul was not in her eyes. The lifelong habit of suppression could not be broken in a day.

On one occasion the man placed in the calcium light—that is, next Evelyn at dinner—was a Mr. Barns—Watson Staniford Barns. Mrs. Garst considered him tedious herself, but he was possessed of mighty erudition—also stocks and bonds—and a large manner, and she thought that perhaps these endowments might fit Evelyn's "peculiar notions."

Across the table on this occasion was Winston Manning. He was one of Mrs. Garst's "dear boys," and was asked to

fill in. She had no designs on him; she had always told him that he had all the talents save that of making a sensitive woman happy—and he had no money. Evelyn was struck with his vivid personality. Such a noble brow as he had, she thought, must have something worth while behind it; then at a second glance she saw that "something" gleam through deep and brilliant brown eyes—most women noticed the eyes first—and she said to herself, "I like sealskin eyes, too."

He was "wasted," however, on Miss Verne—the ubiquitous Miss Verne, always invited because energetic parents kept society in her debt; always arrayed in gowns suitable to a dashing woman; amiable, negative, with pretty, china-blue eyes that said nothing and had a perpetual look in them of oversleep. Poor man! With what winning patience he kept dashing the waves of his genial wit against the rock of her stolidity!

Barns had heard that Miss Ross was clever, and he went in to make an impression with what his admirers told him was a talent for repartee. Evelyn responded with an emaciated smile. "Primitive, ponderous, platitudinous," was the inward comment of the intolerant young woman. Barns concluded, after a struggle, that she must prefer more weighty matter; he changed to the classics and words of four syllables—and quotations. Heavens, how the man could quote! From Plato to Kipling, he shot forth the fruits of other minds as a Roman-candle shoots stars—with the exception that, coming through the medium of his lips, the matter ceased to be luminous or volatile, and fell crushingly.

Evelyn's smile sank, flickered, almost died; the general conversation wobbled; the hardy American Beauty roses in the centre of the table began to droop; Mrs. Garst cast apprehensive glances at a delicate *soufflé* being served; everything threatened collapse excepting Barns. Even to him came the suspicion that he had not, as yet, hit upon topics of special interest to Miss Ross. As a feeler toward this end he finally

inquired: "Miss Ross, what quality of mind do you admire most?"

Weary eyes were raised to his as she responded, "Originality."

It was then that Manning seemed to choke, and partly covered his crimson face with his napkin. No one, save the lynx-eyed Evelyn, discovered that the apparent catastrophe was but the result of laughter.

At the first quiet the persevering Barns continued: "And after that, what quality next?"

"Appreciation," quickly returned Evelyn, as, between the branches of the centre roses, her blue eyes and Manning's brown ones exchanged glances of merriment. She smiled brilliantly on the delighted Barns—with the tail of her eye in another direction—and said: "I like to see the pith of a remark taken in before I've finished making it."

"But it's dangerous to swallow piths," came with prompt emphasis from the other side of the table, "and yours come so swiftly; it's a pith and a—blow."

After dinner they met in the drawing-room as tried friends. They chattered together frankly and simply as genuine souls will when once they recognize each other. Manning had the alert mind that absorbs voluminously, and gives forth—under the right encouragement—freely, brilliantly. Evelyn Ross knew how to give the right encouragement.

She was not stooping intellectually this time to please a man, but using all the intelligence and quickness of which she was capable to keep pace with the rapid march of this man's thoughts. She learned that he loved the things artistic that were dear to her soul. Often he expressed her own ideas, but more vividly than she could do; his experience had been wider. His personality brought to her the thinking, striving, gifted world; the world of deeds where life is worth while; the world she longed and pined for.

Meantime he was saying to himself: "Gad, how a pair of understanding eyes

draw a man out! Wonder if that interest is all genuine."

"Do you find her too haughty?" asked Mrs. Garst when she had a word with him alone.

"No, by George! That girl could draw pearls of wit from the head of a plow-horse. Why, Mrs. Garst, I've been wavering on the verge of eloquence here myself!"

"Well, if you stopped wavering and jumped in, it would not be for the first time, old boy, though I acknowledge your scintillations are a matter of moods and the right listener."

"Then *you* should have no complaint coming——"

"Don't flirt with me. Conserve your energies! I'm going to try to persuade Miss Ross to sing. She is very diffident about it because her voice has not been cultivated to any extent, but—well, wait till you hear it!"

Evelyn lost her timidity that night; she felt herself appreciated in advance. The effect was electrical. As soon as she had finished, Manning jumped to her side.

"You sing like a nightingale—but one that has always been caged," he said.

She looked at him, and thought how delightful it was to meet this man who realized her might-have-beens.

They fell into a talk on music, and he said to her, half-laughing, "May I bring my fiddle around some time?"

When Mrs. Garst and Evelyn were alone the girl asked with a worried expression whether Mr. Manning could really play the violin well. That instrument poorly played was a horror to her.

"Indeed he does," his friend replied. "Winston has the artistic temperament to his finger-tips. How he does try his law-partners! They say that when he has an important case—it doesn't happen with stunning frequency—and a rhapsody to master at the same time he masters the rhapsody and gives what time he can spare from serious affairs to the case. Sometimes I think he may have real genius; he has the symp-

toms—brilliance, unreasonableness, unreliability.”

“He was reliable tonight when you expected him to entertain Miss Verne.”

“Oh, he doesn’t mind her. They know each other very well—were brought up together.”

“That accounts for her attempt at the table to tell a funny story. She broke down just as she reached the point, and wouldn’t go on because she decided that it was too risqué.”

“It must have contained the word ‘stocking,’ don’t you think?”

“Yes, or ‘ankle.’ Dinner was just over at the time and he tried to make her go on by saying that we were all expected to unbend ‘over the walnuts and the wine’—and what do you suppose she replied? ‘These are not walnuts, Winston, they are pecans.’

“But don’t imagine Winston sacrificing himself to any enormous extent. He likes Miss Verne. He says she rests his nerves like a calm, cool lake. He admires her repose.”

It was not three days before Manning appeared with his violin. He played untiringly—with headlong passion at times, and then with a touch so delicate that his instrument seemed fashioned to express emotions too fine for human utterance. To Evelyn’s songs his obligatos were so inspiring that she outdid herself, and astonished Mrs. Garst with the fire and strength she suddenly displayed. Neither Manning nor Evelyn was troubled with undue modesty regarding the success of their efforts together, but exulted with unblushing frankness over the fine effect they produced.

For them the hours flew by unheeded; for Mrs. Garst they went slowly while she prepared herself for a disappointment. Manning was the last man, she knew, that she would have had Evelyn fancy. He was in the long run, she acknowledged to herself, a fine friend; but with the best will in the world toward others, he was singularly insensible to their feelings, both because he was always absorbed in the intellectual fad of the moment and from

the fact that he had never as yet experienced the failures and sufferings that develop the sympathies and make us human.

His was the “vigorous, various, versatile” mind that leaves little room for the growth of the affections. “As good company as one could wish—while he’s interested; the soul of generosity—when he remembers,” acknowledged his friend to herself, “but his interests have a way of shifting suddenly, if a wife does not follow—there’s not even money to furnish diversions for lonely intervals. However,” and the expressive shoulders could not resist a slight upward movement, “if she becomes interested, there is nothing for a good friend to do but help matters along.”

What Manning wanted he endeavored to attain with small concern for conventionalities and obstacles. He found Miss Ross stimulating. He wanted her time and attention and did not hesitate to monopolize all he could of it. He felt quite certain, too, that the hours she spent with him were not wasted to her. When it was not music that he brought to go over with her it was a fine poem he had run upon, a salient bit of prose or a new play; and as Evelyn had never taken up bridge, long afternoons were theirs to spend over the grate-fire in the music-room, exchanging unworldly, bizarre philosophies of their own conception that each reveled in letting out to a kindred spirit.

Thus a month flew by without the realization coming to either of them that the time they spent together was longer than the conventions often know. Neither did they suspect how much the tact of Mrs. Garst had to do with their being left undisturbed. When they wanted her at the piano she was at liberty, but at all other times sadly pressed with engagements. She had a surprising number of errands that she asked them to do for her which took them miles from town in her automobile. When Manning called afternoons she had an agreeable way of taking it for granted that he would stay on to din-



ner, and a convenient one of forgetting that perhaps he had availed himself of that form of her hospitality for the two or three days preceding.

Evelyn knew content at last. For the first time in years there was no one to complain of her; she had the constant companionship of a congenial, sympathetic woman and the admiration of a man gifted enough to satisfy her. Manning's mind was remarkably clever, yet she was conscious that he had leaned upon her opinions; original, yet her ideas colored his own; then to all the ups and downs and tangents of his mutable moods she knew she was ever satisfying. She could draw out his best and make it to shine both before others and himself as no one else could do. The knowledge gave her an entirely new and exhilarating sense of power that vivified her days. Color crept into her cheeks, and something warm into her heart. Were the Fates to turn affable at last? Was she to know content?—to cherish and to be cherished by that long-elusive, almost despaired of twin-soul?

Mrs. Garst still watched the affair with trepidation. Was it Manning's heart that Evelyn appealed to, or was this another of his intellectual enthusiasms? His eyes kindled when he looked at her, to be sure, but they were the sort of brown orbs with unfathomable depths in them that were forever gleaming and glowing on any excuse. What else could be expected when they were turned in beaming approval on a pretty woman? She considered his admiration too frank and unveiled. She missed the signals of anxiety or suspense that emotion, whether demonstrative or suppressed, usually hangs out.

He was drinking joyously from the fount of Evelyn's mind and sympathy; would he in his turn fill the void in her heart? Even were he to give his best to her, would it amount to a third of her best in the matter of love? She had been chastened by Fate and gave exaggerated appreciation to every happiness; he had been petted by the erratic lady, and took happiness as a mat-

ter of course. Could he appreciate her needs?

Mrs. Garst gave voice to her sentiments so far, one day, as to say to Evelyn:

"My dear, for the first time in history you are being too sweet to a man. Why don't you flaunt Winston a bit, as you do other men too much? Neglect him for a week for some other man. Make him miserable. He's an irresponsible boy in his feelings as yet; deepen them. Believe me, he will think twice as much of you if you make him suffer."

It was good worldly advice, but Evelyn's powers of dissimulation did not reach that far. She and Happiness were too great strangers to each other to begin, immediately, the blithe game of hide-and-seek.

One afternoon Manning appeared wearing a look of unwonted diffidence. No, he was not intending to propose to Evelyn; it was something bulky in his pocket that unmanned him. After a few moments he drew it forth sheepishly. It was a comedy of his own. He held it out blushing to Evelyn. "Please look it over and tell me which is plain rot and which is tommyrot."

"Delighted! Then we'll name it, 'The Ejection of Thomas.'"

Upon reading the play Evelyn found it like its author—sparkling and erratic. It seemed to her there was the touch of genius in it, but there was also the waywardness and inconsistency that usually accompany the first efforts of genius. The next time Manning appeared they sat down at a table together, blue pencil in hand, and went slowly through it. Evelyn praised one part, ridiculed another, suggested the bringing forward of this character, the subduing of that—all absorbed in work she loved, and perfectly frank. With mind concentrated and imagination all alert, she reasoned as clearly, analyzed as closely, grasped the whole as firmly and comprehensively, as though, sitting there in the firelight, she did not present a picture of particularly frail, nervous, dainty femininity.

When they reached the end Manning

leaned back in his chair and gazed at her a full minute before saying impressively: "Miss Evelyn Ross, your mind in action is one of the prettiest operations it has ever been my good luck to see! If you will kindly continue to put my brain in order, and to sweep down cobwebs, and throw out trash, and patch up, and polish up the little that's left, I may make something out of this effusion yet."

"Nonsense! It's easy enough to criticize other people's work."

"If you'll but drop me the bones from your feasts of reason I——"

"Metaphors again!"

"Yes, the theme calls for eloquence. But this analytical power—tell me how you came by it; but I know—by experience. You have written something yourself. Come, confess."

"Nothing but a poem once."

"What! And did you have it accepted?"

"Yes; the nineteenth time I wrote it."

"You will let me see it?"

"Certainly, some time."

"You stopped there?"

"Oh, yes."

"Will you please tell me why?"

She spared him a recital of domestic distractions, not to speak of the time it takes to make one's own gowns, and answered merely: "Because dragging an original idea out of my brain is like pulling a wisdom tooth out of my mouth, and takes longer."

"Humph! Yes, I've noticed it."

Then, seriously and sympathetically: "I understand. There are handicaps? High ideals and ability and a big handicap; that's the tragedy of life, after all, isn't it?" He had no idea that he was quoting Mrs. Garst.

"Not when the ability is small and friends are over-appreciative," she returned.

Day after day, for weeks, they revised the comedy, until they both considered the "bumpy places" smoothed out; then she held out her hand to him: "I want to be the first to congratulate you. I'm proud to know you."

"Not that from *you*," he said, even as he took her hand warmly in both of his. "The finish—the best part of it, is yours."

He left that week for New York to submit the play to a manager with whom he was fortunate enough to be acquainted.

When Manning was gone Evelyn's conversation fell off sadly. Lips that had framed so many piquant retorts were almost given over to tame smiles. She became such a different person that poor Mrs. Garst had a lonely time of it down in her mundane sphere. Evelyn sang, though, more than of old; there was a richer note in her voice; there was a carol in her heart. She had not achieved, but—who cares! A woman should be secondary, anyway. Is it not enough to foster, to inspire, to share? The old unrest was gone.

Manning was to have been away a week, but two passed without his appearance. It surprised Evelyn that she heard from him but once in that time. He wrote that so many conditions entered into the acceptance of his play that it would be some time before he would know its fate, and he named a day for his return. On that day Evelyn received a box of violets from him in Detroit, and on his enclosed card the request: "More congratulations, please."

Could it be that the comedy had been accepted immediately, after all? She could have shouted with delight, only—she wanted to exult with *him*. What a way to let her know of a success in which they were both so interested! Why had he not come in person to give her the news? Perhaps it was not the play—perhaps there was some other reason for— Was the pang that shot through her heart that of disappointment, or the fiercer grip of a premonition? No, no, neither. What nonsense! He would rush in soon, in that breezy, beaming way of his, and explain everything in one breath, and take both her hands and squeeze them until they ached, and tell her again what an inspiration she had been to him, and that she was the very cleverest girl he knew.

She shut herself in her room to be

alone with the purple bloom in her lap. At last, at last, life was violet-scented, filled with harmony. She raised the flowers to her cheek. "We grew in shadow—you and I—overspread and lowly. *You* took on lovely hues and gave out fragrance just the same, but I—I moped and pined for the sun. Now it shines on me; now you'll see how I shall stretch 'way up and open silken petals. You are too sweet-minded to be jealous, or you would die of envy at the gorgeous hues I'm going to disclose, and the fragrance and the sweetness—in the light of the sun. He's written a play, little blossoms! And he's going to be famous some day; and I—I am going to help him. Think of it! But all the time I shall love you best of all flowers, for you blossomed without any sun at all, yet now you give your fragrant lives to bring the message of my sun to me."

An hour later Evelyn was one of a dozen guests seated at a luncheon-table, flower-decked and candle-illuminated, at the house of one of Mrs. Garst's friends. A lull in the conversation in her neighborhood brought into prominence the remarks across the table, and she heard the time-honored query: "What on earth does he see in her?"

No one seemed to find answer, and a stately maiden philosophized: "Isn't that just the way with matches in real life! The clever woman always marries some stupid man, and the gifted man some unambitious, literal woman. The thing is so common in life I wonder that it took an Ibsen to put it on paper."

"The families fixed up this affair years ago, did they not?" inquired the hostess.

"Yes, and things have not been going to suit her people of late; there's been some falling out——"

"Worse than that—falling off—in his attentions. That's what precipitated the announcement."

A bright-eyed girl laughed and said: "Who's the Other Girl?"

Only one or two pairs of eyes glanced furtively at Evelyn. No one present was very well acquainted with her or her affairs.

Unconscious of any observation she asked: "Won't someone tell me who 'he' and 'she' are?"

"Oh, hadn't you heard?" said the girl who had philosophized a moment before. "It was announced last night—the engagement of Miss Verne and Mr. Manning."

Mrs. Garst's wine-glass dropped to her plate with a small crash of broken glass, and some of the contents fell on her beautiful gown. When she dared to look over at Evelyn she was amazed.

Evelyn's wine-glass was steady in her hand. Apparently emotionless, she gazed from calm, expressionless eyes at—anyone save Mrs. Garst. She appeared only somewhat paler than usual, and suddenly stately again—and "soulless." Her early training in meeting with unruffled front the slings and arrows of an untoward fate stood her in good stead that day.

In the months that followed it enabled her to accept with serene graciousness the encomiums of her enthusiastic friend, Winston Manning; to smile composedly—even a bit indifferently—when, his successful drama having raised him to fame, he generously shouted from the house-tops the help and inspiration she had been to him.

In after years it served her well in the rôle she played so admirably—that of the brilliant, worldly wife of the millionaire, Gilbert Law.



# KING'S X

By Juliet Wilbor Tompkins

PUSSY arranged the luggage with the initials concealed and read a Baedeker disguised in a black cover until the young American opposite had realized that these two fellow-countrymen were not to be lightly approached, and had taken himself off to a smoking-compartment. A couple of insignificant Frenchmen and an Italian priest being all that remained, she relaxed into guarded conversation with her companion, a long-limbed, dark-haired girl who lay back passively in her corner, her eyes on the tranquil Italian landscape.

"I do hate leaving you in Rome alone, Mary," she began, in evident repetition of a past discussion.

"I don't see why. I shall have a lovely time."

"That is just what I am afraid of," and Pussy gave a worried sigh. "You will do some queer thing the minute my back is turned." Mary's smile passed from surprised, though amused, to apologetic.

"Poor Pussy! Have I tried you?" she asked ruefully. "I thought I had been fearfully discreet. Do you realize that I have not made a single train acquaintance in two months—?"

"But you have lain down everywhere—in stations, in parks, in places where no one ever lay down before!" The grievance came out in a plaintive burst. "You could write a book on Historic Spots I Have Lain Down On. And people did stare so; they would have spoken if I had not been there. Please promise you won't lie down while you are alone!"

Mary was laughing. "Not once outside of my own room! From this

moment I shall be absolutely conventional—truly, Pussy. You need not worry about me. Dear me, my feet are so tired—I think I will put on my slippers." And she placidly unlaced her boots, her eyes on the distant mountains, wholly unconscious of the concentrated stares of her fellow-passengers as she dropped off one shoe, gave her stocking a little pull at the toe, and took a pair of black kid slippers from her bag. Pussy had opened her lips to comment, but turned away with a shrug of exasperated helplessness. Her color rose a little as one of the Frenchmen murmured some comment to his companion and the two continued to watch as though hoping for further developments. Mary, having packed her boots, brought out a bottle of alcohol and a bit of linen and proceeded to scrub her face, looking interestedly at the results on the linen. She seemed inclined to display these to Pussy, but the latter was sternly absorbed in a book, so she forebore to interrupt.

When at last the great dome rose mistily over the level Campagna Pussy closed her "Italy United" and refused an offer of the alcohol bottle with a forced smile.

"Well, I could get to you in an hour, if you needed me," she admitted. "And it really would be stupid of me to give up this visit."

"And, my dear little cousin, remember my age," Mary protested.

"If you only looked it!" sighed Pussy.

The sun beat hot on the Spanish Steps the next morning, and cool memories of the Pincian Gardens made

Mary hesitate, then, with a joyous realization of her freedom, throw over a carefully drawn-up plan for a profitable morning and seek a secluded bench in the exquisitely iced shade that falls like a curtain from the trees of Italy. At first a feeling of guilt would obtrude itself; two months of sight-seeing with the conscientious Pussy, who let no moment slip by unaccounted for, had left an annoying habit of diligence. Then she remembered to laugh at herself and to stretch her long limbs still more luxuriously, with her head thrown back to the aromatic deliciousness of the chilled heat. The one check left on her content was a haunting memory of her promise not to lie down; she kept an elbow hooked over the back of the seat as a preventive.

"Well, I knew it was you! No one else on earth could look so supremely comfortable."

A man in the youth of middle age, thin, brown-faced, stooping, stood smiling down on her. She started, holding out both hands in frank joy.

"Mark! What are you doing over here?"

"What are you?" he asked, taking a seat beside her.

"I am being trained, improved and educated by my little cousin Pussy. You remember Pussy, who cried if we didn't do just as she said? And who had the famous coming-out ball?"

"But she was a baby, to us."

"Oh, yes, but women catch up to each other toward the thirties. She is really the elder, now. Are you over here for a rest?"

He sighed. "I should say not! I have come to make a last stand against senile decay. Mary, I loathed coming!" He turned to her with humorous earnestness. "I wanted to settle, settle, settle! I wanted to marry the stupidest woman I knew and do the same things every day for the rest of my life. Then I remembered how I starved and slaved to come, twenty years ago, and all the passionate miracles I squeezed out of six weeks and a second-cabin ticket, and I was

ashamed! So I made one last flight from decrepitude."

"And have you escaped?" she asked, her eyes warm with sympathetic enjoyment.

"At moments. But oh, my dear, I suspect it is just waiting for me, back there; and I'm sure Mrs. Eustace G. Saunders is!" They laughed together with a joyousness that made her presently exclaim:

"Why have I lost sight of you so? How could we have let it happen?" She realized that she had spoken stupidly as a slight shade crossed his face, but was glad of it when he answered frankly:

"Oh, well, I fell into a habit of avoiding the old place, I suppose. It was natural, after an experience like mine. How have Grace and her millionaire hit it off?"

"She is fat and complacent, I am sorry to say. I never forgave her."

He shrugged. "Oh, I have, long ago. Will Pussy let you lunch with me?" he added.

"She is away for ten days—visiting a princess."

"How like her—good little Pussy! She always did the correct thing. Well, then—oh, see here! What is to prevent——?"

"Well?" she prompted. He was still considering her dubiously, but with a mischievous light of purpose in his eyes.

"I will tell you after luncheon," he decided.

Over their coffee, two hours later, he showed her a map of Italy marked with a zigzag line that started in Rome. With a sigh of desire she read the names through which the line passed.

"Oh, those beloved little towns, with one beautiful thing tucked away in them for an excuse, but nothing else one has to see, and the oleanders in bloom, and utter freedom!" she exclaimed.

"That is the route I am starting on tomorrow," he said casually, returning the map to its folds. "Why don't you take a little run through the same places yourself?"

She gave a startled laugh. "With you?"

"Well, I dare say we should come together more or less on the way!"

She stared at the idea for some seconds, her longing finally coming out in a despairing:

"Oh, dear! Pussy would die," she added in explanation.

"Why tell her? Oh, come on, Mary, let's be sports for once in our lives. We have always been so infernally proper!" He planted his elbows on the table, leaning his chin on his clasped hands and regarding her with amused, persuasive eyes. "What is the sense in always not doing everything?"

"If only it weren't for Pussy!" But the note of regret in her voice was growing perfunctory.

"We are such good old things, you and I," he encouraged her. "Don't you think we have earned a right to one harmless little spree?"

"You mean that we might claim King's X for a week or two?" she suggested, with a reminiscent crossing of her fingers. In their childhood the bending of the third finger over the second, with a cry of "King's X!" gave immunity from capture. His face lit up.

"Exactly," he said gratefully. "And there will probably be no one to tag us, so late in the season."

"We always did have good times together," she mused. The green things in the window beside them stirred suggestively, as with the breath of gardens, from the court a little splashing fountain murmured of running water. Rome was hot and made demands, and all at once the freedom of the city looked rather like loneliness. "I'm sure I am old enough for anything," she declared suddenly.

"And I am too old for anything," he assented, feeling the region of his head that at their first meeting had nourished a billow curl. Their eyes sought and questioned each other.

"Oh, why not!" she murmured.

He lifted his wine-glass to her. "Ah, Mary, you're a dead-game sport!" he exclaimed.

Five days later Mary, bareheaded and short-skirted, lounged against the wall of a crumbling monastery in a dark green shower of vines, her lap full of ripe figs, while Mark, squatted on the ground beside her, absorbedly fingered out a quavering and melancholy tune on a shepherd's pipe.

"There—recognize that?" he asked. She shook her head, too lazily content for speech. "Well, perhaps 'Under the Daisies' came a year or so too early for you. See if you know this." After a few bars, she struck in:

"Good-bye, Charlie! While you are away  
Write me a letter, love,  
Send it by a turtle-dove—"

They finished it in duet, with laughter for its inanity.

"You can tell a person's vintage by the songs he remembers," Mark added. "You must date back to this, too. Listen:

"Do you love me, Mollie darling?  
Let your answer be a kiss."

She joined in. Then she stretched her long arms up into the vines. "Oh, Mark, isn't it beautiful to be Americans!" she cried. "No two of any other nation on earth could have this delicious and utterly harmless spree!"

"They wouldn't want it, alas!" said Mark. "The appreciation of harmlessness is entirely an American—characteristic."

"Why did you hesitate so over that last word?"

He smiled up at her. "I was tempted to say—defect."

"But you don't really think that!" He put away his shepherd's pipe and threw himself back in the grass.

"I don't 'really think' anything in Italy. A fig, kind lady, for the love of heaven!"

She dropped one into his outstretched hand, looking down on him reflectively. "And yet you are really more conventional than I am," she commented. "You were uneasy when you appeared that first day."

"Oh, yes. I had thought of all the bogies overnight, and felt that I ought

not to let you. The risk was all on your side, you see."

"I don't know. How about Mrs. Eustace G. Saunders?"

He shuddered. "Oh, Mary, don't! Surely I have checked the settling process—for a few years, at least. Why, I have led you into the maddest kind of adventure—this is wild youth and romance, how can you hint that senile decay is just round the corner?"

Mary affected to yawn behind her outspread fingers. "Funny how a mad adventure can feel so like the peace that passeth all understanding," she murmured. "We can play it is dangerous, but really, you know——"

A stone bounded past them, evidently dislodged from the path above; it was followed by a young man in walking-clothes, a knapsack on his back and on his lips a cheerful American refrain. He stopped at sight of them, clutching his cap, his face lighting up with satisfaction.

"Oh, I knew there must be Americans about somewhere," he exclaimed. "Didn't one of your party lose this? I found it five miles back on the high-road."

The little green volume of Byron that he held out was so familiar that Mary took it with a smile of recognition—a smile that quickly vanished as she realized where the book habitually traveled.

"Yes, this is—ours," she said quietly, coldly, and held it open so that Mark might see the flyleaf, whereon was written Pussy's name in full. He shot a startled glance at her, receiving only a faint, bewildered shrug for answer.

"I think I came down to Rome on the train with you and—another lady," the young man went on, less confidently. Pussy herself could not have received the news more unresponsively; a brief nod and averted eyes begged not to detain him. A question about the road, put diffidently, imploringly, showed how dire was his need of American speech. Mark indicated it with three words and a gesture, but still he lingered. "I am doing Italy on foot, myself," he told them. "Your party

must see it very differently, by automobile." Complete silence followed, and so he had to pass on, though his very boots seemed to hold back in the hope of some relenting gleam of friendliness.

When he had disappeared Mark turned inquiringly to Mary, who had risen and was pinning on her hat.

"What is it? Did we lose the book out of the carriage yesterday?"

"We might have; only I hadn't it with me. It always goes in Pussy's bag."

"But how in thunder——!"

"Exactly!" She stood waiting while he meditated.

"Pussy is not in these parts, and we are," he declared finally; "therefore you must have taken it by mistake."

"Perhaps I did," she admitted without conviction. "I remember that youth on the train; he wanted to make friends, but Pussy froze him out. What did he mean about an automobile?"

"Oh, nothing, probably. He seems a gregarious soul." Mark pulled himself to his feet and stood frowning down at the gracious slopes of vineyard and orchard beneath them. "See here; you don't suppose Pussy changed her plans about that visit, do you?" he demanded.

"I have no reason to think so," said Mary. Their eyes did not meet, for a baffling constraint had suddenly arisen between them. They had encountered other fellow-countrymen in the five days of their wanderings, but had passed them with a murmured "King's XI" and gone on their way laughing; it had remained for this guileless youth to plunge them into unforeseen and intolerable awkwardness. After a few moments of forced conversation Mary made an impatient effort to break down the barrier.

"That is the cloud no bigger than a man's hand that always follows up romance," she declared. "The serpent has entered paradise, Mark."

"Oh, pshaw, let's forget it," was the irritable answer.

They had both forgotten it when they



set out in the freshness of the morning on a ten-mile drive to their next stopping place. Mark left his lodging on foot, and Mary overtook him, light-heartedly swinging his bag, a mile from the village. A little rush of joy ended in a laugh as she waved greeting to him. Who would not be joyous at such companionship after two months of Pussy—good little Pussy with her well-stored mind and her perfectly correct ideas?

"Oh, I want to live here," she exclaimed as he jumped in beside her. "I want to live in a little pebble-goat plaster house with red roses on it!"

He roared at her adjective. "Pebble-goat—oh, the boots of our infancy! What is a pebble-goat, do you suppose? I looked out for one year after year, faithfully. I had my first pair the year Hayes and Tilden ran."

"Dear me, you *are* old! I don't remember before Garfield."

"You probably had the usual feminine indifference to public affairs at that time. What a bully girl you were, Mary!"

"I am still."

"Rather! I should like to know how much of all this is Italy, and how much the permanent you."

"Of all what?"

"Why, you seem to me so—serene, some way; so poised and satisfied; so master of the situation. I don't meet many women who give me just that impression—unless they have families. Are you so in America?"

"I will give you an infallible test to know if a woman is satisfied or not," she said. "Find out whether she likes or dreads Sunday."

"Is that the day when the ghost walks?"

She would not explain. "You need only find out that one thing," she repeated.

"And today is Saturday," he reminded her. "Well, I'll be hanged—who would have expected that off here?"

"That" was the lowered front and bulging eyes of a red touring-car that came snorting down upon them from

the hill they were approaching. The driver caught up his stump of whip and jerked the horse to one side and Mark, seeing fear in the gesture, sprang out and went to the little beast's head. The car obligingly slowed up and between them he and the driver managed to keep the pony between the shafts and the harness intact. He was too much occupied to get more than a dim impression of two women and a man and a polite regret spoken in his own language. When the car had vanished and the pony was soothed he turned back to the carriage; and was amazed to find that Mary had completely vanished down between the seats, under the linen laprobe.

"My dear girl, were you frightened?" he exclaimed. "Why didn't you get out? I am so sorry!" She made no motion to rise, and something in the eyes looking solemnly up at him startled him to the quick. "What is it?"

She slowly struggled up before she answered. "You didn't see?"

"See what—who?"

"Can't you guess?"

"Not——!"

"Yes. Pussy." They stared at each other in blank horror.

"But she didn't see you?" he questioned weakly.

"I hope not. I did my best."

"I thought she was visiting a princess!"

"So did I."

"What have you written her?"

"Nothing since I started. I simply said then that I was going to cruise about this region for a week or so and should not write or have letters forwarded. Of course, that explains the Byron and the automobile. The boy must have seen them."

"And you think she is after us? Did she recognize me?"

"I don't know what to think."

"If she is, we ought to turn right round and hunt her up. Telegraph—anything."

"Yes; but if she isn't, it would mean an unnecessary fuss."

"She really would be scandalized?"

"She would simply die." They

laughed rather forlornly. "I am afraid King's X won't hold much longer," she added; "but, oh, Mark, haven't we been happy?"

"So happy that it is hard to be as penitent as I should be. I had no earthly right to let you come," he admitted sadly. "I am going to take you back to Rome today."

"Oh, not just yet," she protested. "They are gone, Mark—miles away by this time. We are going to have Sunday, anyway. Monday I will go back, but—please let us be happy now!" She was frankly in earnest. He looked away from her to the sapphire gleam of the little bay that was waiting for them far below.

"The woman tempted me," he said. "Very well, then; it is King's X until Monday, my dear."

They forcibly threw care behind them. And yet they were not as happy as they wanted to be. A haunting apprehension made their eyes absent and their speech vague. Their charming and innocent idyl had been tarnished by the suggestion that they were being hunted—chased down like any vulgar runaway couple. The marvelously exceptional quality of their case seemed suddenly a little hard to prove. As they neared their village, Mary for the first time in her life felt an acute and harassing consciousness of her fellow-men. The sensation threw a new light on Pussy.

"Really, she is not such a little goose as I thought," was her silent admission as she rearranged her skirt, which she had drawn about her shoulders shawl-fashion when they met the coast breeze.

At the edge of the village Mark got out and sought his own lodging on foot. He did not reappear again that day. Mary lunched and rested, glad to be alone at first; toward four o'clock she began to wonder a little, and at five she went for a walk by herself. Dinner was served to her in a charming back garden under a grape trellis, and she lingered there expectantly until the soft dusk had become darkness and the village clock struck nine.

"Oh, very well, then!" she said, and

went to her room; but at ten she was still awake, involuntarily listening to the steps that passed in the courtyard below. "There is no reason he should come. We are perfectly independent of each other," she assured herself impatiently. "Do go to sleep!"

When she came down in the morning Mark, looking gloomy and tired, was seated at her table under the grape-vine waiting for her.

"Did you think I had deserted you?" he asked quickly. She was too glad at seeing him to remember what she had thought.

"I knew you would turn up," she said gaily. "Have you breakfasted?"

"Yes—oh, no, I believe I haven't. Coffee—anything. Do you know who is staying at my place?" he went on when the waiter had left them.

"Not Pussy!"

"Hardly. But that young goat with the knapsack."

"Perhaps he is the pebble-goat you have been looking for," she suggested; but Mark was in no mood for frivolity.

"He stuck to me all day, confound him!" he burst out. "He asked me first if I was alone, and like a great fool I said I was."

"And so you are. My being here is a coincidence."

"Well, I didn't know what he would call it, so I did not refer to you; and then he clung like a burr. He is not a bad chap in his way, but his own mother couldn't call him sensitive. He evidently thinks I am bearish, but likable underneath."

"Not a bad description of you," assented Mary, and Mark, having his coffee before him, relaxed into a smile.

"Thanks. Well, I had sense enough to tell him that I expected to join 'my party' today, and he did not actually ask in words to come, too, though I dare say he will lie in wait for some accidental encounter. I came here at dawn to escape him. How soon can you start?"

"After you have had another cup of coffee," Mary decided.

High above them on the cliffs lay the gardens that made the little place

famous, hereditary property of an absentee prince and open to the public for a guide's fee. They chose a steep path strung with numberless flights of steps rather than the winding road, and climbed rapidly away from their worries in the glittering beauty of the morning. At the top was a stone parapet, worn by the elbows of the countless thousands who had leaned there to look down on tawny coast and blue sea. No four elbows had ever leaned in greater harmony of enjoyment. They did not even have to say how beautiful it was, or how happy they were in being there; appreciation lay like one garment wrapping them both, and only a little grave smile was needed to acknowledge it.

"We have wrested this out of fate, anyway," said Mark at last. "We shall have no right to whimper tomorrow."

"Yes; and then Sunday will be over with," she admitted; then caught her lower lip as though to arrest the words, with a quick look to see if he had noticed. It was hopeless to suppose that anything could pass Mark. A wicked sidelong glance was on her.

"Ah—Sunday over with?" he commented. "What was that infallible recipe I seem to remember?"

"Don't be tiresome!" She had actually colored.

"So you are not absolutely and wholly satisfied, after all, Mary?"

Before she could answer the Sunday morning peace was shattered by an alien sound. It came again, an intrusive blast that drew their startled glance to the strip of road winding far below. Like a speeding bug, a red touring-car was making for the village, and their sick eyes could discern two white veils and the dark dot of a cap inside.

The elbows were abruptly withdrawn.

"Well, shall we go down and take our medicine?" asked Mark. Mary did not look very ready for it.

"We might as well see the gardens, now that we are up here," she suggested. "I may be locked up on bread and water, later."

He hesitated, evidently trying to find expression for a difficult matter.

"You know, Mary, I am—committed to any extent you please," he said finally, stumbling over the words. "If you think——"

The laugh with which she interrupted was wholly gay. "Indeed, I think that would make it vastly worse," she said cheerfully; "though I appreciate it, my dear Mark! What would Mrs. Eustace G. Saunders say?" she added. He did not look as relieved as might have been expected, though he answered in the same key.

"She would undoubtedly say, 'What a curious place the world is!' or, 'Men don't love the way women do,' or something of that nature."

"Who is she, anyway?"

"A prosperous widow of a suitable age."

"Good-looking?"

"Very."

"Nice?"

"I suppose so. I met her only once, but a voice said, 'There is your fate.'"

"What made you so sure?"

"Because she was so infernally stupid! Comfortable and pleasant and stupid; and something within me went off like an alarm-clock. I saw as in a vision what I might come to if I did not run for my life. So I ran."

"And it was your idea that you have escaped, my poor Mark?" she asked pityingly. He smiled to himself.

"Yes," he said quietly. "I have escaped, my dear Mary! Do you really want to see these gardens?" They reached the great gates, where a guide already lay in wait for them.

"Most assuredly," said Mary.

The gardens were wonderfully lovely in their formal fashion, but the guide found his patrons disappointingly absent-minded. When even a mischievous jet of water springing into their faces from an innocent-looking bush had failed to arouse their admiration, he dropped back to the perfunctory and let them loiter as they would. A brother guide had apparently found a more appreciative visitor; from one of the terraces they presently saw him in lively and pleasant conversation with a youth in knickerbockers.

"I really think we have seen enough," said Mary. The path leading back to the main avenue seemed deserted and they took it hurriedly, with scant attention for the fountain of Neptune or the little white Diana in her summerhouse shrine. They were about to pass with the same indifference the family chapel on the main avenue, but evidently thought better of it, for they dived abruptly inside, just as the youth in knickerbockers emerged from the rose-garden opposite and three new arrivals entered the gates below. It was a good day for tourists; so many were not usual at this season.

Mary took her stand blindly before a great stained-glass window, prepared to stare half an hour, if necessary.

"Hadn't we better go out and meet them?" asked Mark.

"Not until that boy gets past," she objected. "I should hate to have him hear what Pussy may say! He won't—" A step on the portico outside checked her. The youth's cheerful voice was heard assuring the guide that he would wait there while the latter annexed the newcomers.

"We can all go on together," he said happily, and the feet of the other made haste down the gravel, while he seated himself on the steps, his back to the open doorway.

"Thees very grand altar erect by Prince Alessandro in sefenteen hoon-dred and——"

"Yes, yes!"

Already steps were approaching up the avenue. The youth had risen and stood hesitating, cap in hand.

"We can see the sights afterward," Pussy's clear voice was saying. "First we must find if Mary——"

The young man seized his chance. "I beg your pardon—if you are looking for the other lady, she is in the chapel," he volunteered.

"The other lady?" repeated Pussy; then she evidently recognized him. "Oh, you were the— Yes, thank you very much." And they heard her step in the portico.

Mary, realizing for the first time that

she was tightly clutching Mark's hand, dropped it and went forward.

"Well, Pussy!" she said cordially.

"Oh, Mary, at last! I have been chasing you for four days." Pussy's voice sounded wholly friendly, and she kissed her cousin without a shade even of reproof. Her eyes were still too full of the sunshine outside to discern the tall figure in the background. "My dear, the princess came down with the measles the day after we got there," she explained. "We haven't been exposed—she didn't see us; and there the Lanes were with two weeks and a big empty car on their hands. So we have been scouring the country to pick you up. It must have been so stupid for you all alone."

"But she was not alone," said Mark, coming into the light. "Hello, Pussy—how are you? I have been taking care of your cousin for you."

"Why, Mark!" exclaimed Pussy. There was an awful second in which a dubious shadow seemed to hover over her mouth and eyes. But the merciful sunlight, falling on him, emphasized the lines in his kindly, worn face and touched suggestively the place that had once been hidden by a billow curl. Pussy was, after all, rather young; she smiled and held out her hand.

"Well, I am glad she had somebody to be responsible for her," she exclaimed. "You never can tell what that girl will do. Come and meet the Lanes, both of you."

She turned back to the avenue, where the friendly youth was being frozen off by Mrs. Lane and the two guides were hovering by, foreseeing a division. Mary paused in the dark of the chapel to hold up both hands with fingers exultantly crossed.

"It is King's X still, Mark!" she whispered, with a breathless laugh.

"It is, is it!" he said recklessly, and took swift and unexpected advantage of the fact.

"Oh!" It was a note of startled protest, but not of anger; and she did not draw away. Outside, the voice of Pussy was explaining that Mary had

just run across a very dear old friend, and Mrs. Lane was rejoicing that there was an extra seat.

"Mary looks on him as a sort of uncle," said Pussy. "But you will

like him, you know—he isn't really old!"

There was a smothered burst of unseemly laughter near the altar of Prince Alessandro.



## AT THE FORD

By Archibald Sullivan

**W**HEN the rose means nothing but a rose;  
 When storms are storms—not clouds on blue,  
 And rain means naught but cold and chill,  
 Not tears of angels drifting through;  
 When grief means grief and nothing more,  
 When sorrow's kiss is like a blow,  
 And when there is no hope of Spring  
 Beneath the earth's baptism of snow—  
 It will be age—not faithlessness,  
 That stills the music in my throat.  
 Forget not how, when I was young,  
 I knew my song and trilled each note.



## THEIR ASTUTENESS

"**B**EATS all how keen some of these 'ere detectives are!" grimly grumped the Venerable Grouch, as he paused to glare over the top of his newspaper. "Just give 'em a murder mystery, and in less than a week they will have found out everything about the late lamented's taking off except when he was murdered, how, where, why, what for, with what and by whom."



## PARADOXICAL

**M**OTHER-IN-LAW-ELECT—I hope everything will run smoothly at Edith's wedding.

**F**AATHER-IN-LAW-ELECT—Oh, come, now! You know you wouldn't want it to go off without a hitch.

# THE MIGHT OF MANNERS

By Bliss Carman

**T**HAT "Manners make the man" is a goodly old saying with something truer than mere commonplace observation in its sound philosophy. Neither Chesterfield himself, that paragon of deportment, nor Barney McGee, who had

"Chesterfield's way with a touch of the Bowery,"

can be imagined without the potent manners that were natural and characteristic of them. For good manners cannot be donned nor laid aside like a coat. Whether elegant or simple, they are the expressive and appropriate garment of personality, and it is one of the tests for them that they are habitual and can never be misjudged as being assumed or affected. The least touch of affectation or insincerity is fatal to their value. To have bad manners or no manners is to announce oneself a boor; but to use false manners is to betray one's ineptitude.

When they are real and actually reveal the inner personality how mighty manners are! So potent are they, indeed, that we are often carried beyond our ultimate best judgment by the instant enthusiasm and responsive impulse they evoke in us, and by the sway they exercise over our will, and we very readily give them an even higher valuation than is their due. The might of manners is as great as the majesty of mind or the supremacy of soul. One must be stolid indeed not to be sensitive to their potent influence and unconsciously swayed by them.

There is no denying the pleasure of excellent manners, their ease, their advantage, their helpful charm and grace, and the distinction they confer.

But a headlong and headstrong age, devoted to achievement for mere achievement's sake, is apt to consider them superfluous after all—a mark of lightness and artificiality, if not of effeminacy. Our home-made virtues are prone to arrogance and an overweening self-reliance, and are too ready to discount the veritable though subtle power which manners possess. Truculent merit, assured of its own unassailable honesty, and reinforced perhaps by an abundance of physical vigor, scorns to employ any suavity of demeanor, any graciousness or tact in presenting itself, for fear of seeming to concede an atom of its own integrity.

The mistake is not an uncommon one, but it is a grave error none the less. For manners are not an artifice but a true art of behavior, inherent in all procedure, and as closely related to feeling as speech is related to thought. They form the very embodiment of personality when it seeks for social expression, and are every whit as essential as good intention or intelligence. Manners are to ethics what the shell is to the sea-urchin, not merely a domicile to be changed at will, but a structural part of the very being—an outward crustation at once protecting and identifying the individual within. They interpret our meaning and transmit our emotions even more truly than words, thus making possible for the spiritual prisoner in the flesh a life of happiness and understanding. No one is obscure who has distinguished manners. And no one need be misinterpreted who will make his manners expressive of his meanings. They give us the means, if we will but cultivate them as they de-

serve, of escaping from the doom of miserable loneliness, unintelligence and brutality, which would otherwise be ours, and which is the fate of all repressed and thwarted things. They are sanctioned not only by a code of courtesy and consideration for others, but even more by the authentic joyous freedom which they offer ourselves.

The master of good manners is everywhere welcome for his service, awkward situations vanish at his approach, embarrassments are removed, and the air is cleared as if by electric magic. Such an influential force is in itself no small asset in any personal account. Far greater, however, than this obvious power over others, and much more truly valuable, is the serene poise and inward balance of spirit, the glad sense of capability and satisfaction, which must always accompany the possession of good manners and their scrupulous practice.

In the last logical analysis, to live without manners would be as killing to the soul as it would be to the body to live without exercise. They form the world of legitimate activity for our spiritual selves, just as necessary and just as adequate as the world of work and play is for the activity of our physical powers. And while manners without an intelligent *morale* are indeed but a lantern without a candle, the noblest morality without competent manners to convey its beneficent purpose can be but an ineffectual light.

There are men who live like dark-lanterns all their lives, bearing about with them a store of illuminating knowledge which they never show. They are often of excellent ability and irreproachable habits, but without elasticity, vivacity or any accustomed power of self-expression. They may be scientists, philosophers, farmers, or of any trade. It is not a question of calling, but of culture and character. Born perhaps with a naturally shrinking or sullen disposition, that unfortunate characteristic has never been corrected in them by an adequate cultivation of pliancy and ease. For lack of that liberalizing freedom which manners

bestow they are never at home in their environment, but are either excited or morose, without ever knowing where the cause of much of their unhappiness lies. Their careers are forever marred and stunted for want of a sufficient and due means of expression for their really admirable powers. They may not be aware of their lack, but are filled with wonder as they see themselves gradually outstripped by their inferiors, persons of less force, less intelligence and less integrity.

Even more to be regretted is the case of those who deliberately despise manners and altogether discount their value, who find themselves well placed in the world, with well-mannered people all about them, and yet from a mere exaggeration of the ego, or from a lack of comprehension of life, or from an inborn defect of taste and the delicacy of the artist, insist that rough-and-ready is always well enough, and honesty of purpose need take no account of the prejudices and sensibilities through which it has to take its way. Many a man has ruined a brilliant career and nullified all his own great efforts, solely by a disregard of manners. *What* to do to ensure success he knew very well; *why* he did it he also knew; but that *how* it was to be accomplished was of equal consequence he did not know at all. Yet they symbolize a trinity of conduct, these three small words, and indicate a science, a religion and an art of life no one of which is greater or less than the other.

What, then, are good manners, how are they to be secured and what is the secret of commanding so enviable a possession? To be without them is to be out of harmony in any company and to act as a discordant and disquieting, if not actually a disrupting, element. To have them in perfection is to have the faculty of putting oneself in harmonious relation to persons and circumstances, and of abandoning oneself to an occasion and its requirement. Not to think of oneself and so become self-conscious, restrained and embarrassed, nor to be over-effusive and so embarrassing to others, but to yield



to the time and place and situation whatever they demand in order to make the occasion happy and free; in some such mood as that lie the sources of good manners, of courteous bearing and the effective presentation of personality.

How are you to carry the day when your preference and best judgment are pitted against those of ten others, each as much entitled to consideration as yourself? Not by bullying and insistence, for you would only raise their opposition. Not by palpable truckling and concessions, for you would only win contempt. Better by an even regard for the point at issue and a devotion to impersonal aims.

How do those remarkable women who make themselves memorable in the minds of their contemporaries, and sometimes even in history, hold their salons, charm their guests and entertain their troops of friends with such incomparable skill to the unaffected delight of all who know them? Never, you may be sure, by thinking of themselves. One drop of self-consciousness, and their magic would be lost. They must yield themselves with a happy abandon to the spirit of every occasion, forming and controlling it with as much mastery as any other artist bestows upon his creations. How subtle and often unperceived are the difficulties they have to meet and surmount, how charming and apparently easy are the triumphs they secure.

It is not for them to sit by and admire in passive enjoyment. They have no time to wonder if their own apparel is becoming, nor to worry if the soup is hot enough or the caterer has forgotten his order. The task of the hour will engross all their attention and effort from instant to instant. All petty mishaps must be settled before or after the event; but while the function is in progress it will demand all the efforts of the hostess to keep the atmosphere alive and the interest free. A canoe-man in a rapid has no time to worry about the color of his hunting-shirt or to fret because the tobacco was left at the last camping place; his wits are

busy enough avoiding the disasters that are strewn thick all about him—hidden ledges, jagged rocks, sweeping undercurrents and mounting waves in the middle stream.

To forget oneself in the larger interest of the present event, to be capable of a sincere and deep abandonment to the exigency of the moment, this is the secret of good manners. In heroic cases how evident it is! What has been a large part of the power of all great men if not their manners? The traditions of Alexander, Hannibal, Napoleon, Pericles, Dante—of any of the worthies of old or later time—teem with instances of the compelling potency of an apt and unequivocal manner. Such men had the art of doing things, as well as the inclination and foresight; they knew the importance of method, and never dreamed of depending on force or intelligence alone. A good manner is infectious and causes our dearest wishes and ideals to spread and germinate in hosts of other personalities in a primitive way, unattainable by any mere argument however unanswerable or any compulsion however overwhelming. Our logic may be flawless, our will indomitable, even events themselves all in our favor, and still success in any undertaking will be most difficult if we have not the saving grace of a competent manner to supplement our purposes and execute our cherished schemes.

There is no faculty so invaluable to success in the intricate diplomacy of life as this power of fine abandon. It helps us to yield to the inevitable without a grouch. If we miss our train, let us amuse ourselves by watching the crowd until the next one leaves. When fate blocks the highroad it is idle to sit down peevishly in the dust; better take to a circuitous footpath at once and enjoy the flowers we would otherwise have missed.

The abandon which underlies good manners is more than mere self-effacement, for it requires a positive appreciation of the decisive claim of the moment and an unreluctant giving of one's

best self to that inexorable demand. It implies a capacity not only for unselfishly yielding petty individual preference, but for generally and unfeignedly furthering a common cause, and is an ennobling trait seldom to be found in mean or calculating characters. The talent for behavior varies in races as in individuals, and lends to those who possess it an irresistibly endearing charm. It is a source, rather than a product, of civilization, emancipating the heart and liberalizing the mind. Some of the most prominent nations may be conspicuously deficient in the distinction of good manners, while others far more primitive may have them in an eminent degree. One cannot help thinking of the Latin people, with their inherent grace of being, as conspicuously proficient in this regard, in comparison with nations of other stocks, less volatile and less alert. The manners of Old Spain are proverbial, and many a traveler has felt in modern Italy or France a charm of gracious manners sadly lacking in some Northern countries.

It is not a matter of age, ripeness and cultivation, but is an inherent talent or racial characteristic, as deep-seated as the sources of natural gaiety or sullen gloom. An aptitude for manners may appear as unmistakably among the illiterate as among the most cultivated, a delightful surprise. The negro, for example, has an almost incomparable genius for manners. The interest which the men and women of that race take in ceremonious courtesy, in kindly expression, in the small amenities that make up, after all, so much of life, in social behavior and personal diplomacy, is a most marked and lovable trait. To "forget your manners" is with them a serious imputation, and we might very well emulate their gay and spontaneous ease, their dramatic power and politic grace, in dealing with life. Have we not all known colored people whose manners would often put our own in the wrong? As a child, I myself had a nurse in the North, a tall young colored woman, an aristocrat of her

race, whose careful speech and courtly manner I remember most vividly to this day, though I fear I have often fallen short of the example she constantly set her young charge in the use of unflinching politeness and scrupulous English.

In a different way, of a different sort, how excellent are the Indian's manners at his best! The majestic dignity of many an old chief could only be matched in the House of Lords, so surely do blood and breeding tell. Your self-made man is seldom finished to the extent of manners. As compared with the finest product of the Old World or the New, he is like a statue of Rodin's, so different from the classic—very potential, very significant, very striking, if you will, but not fully emerged from original formlessness. The worth is all there, very likely—the thought and originality—but they have scarcely been brought to perfection, and still await their release in delectable manners, in finished form which is the ultimate achievement of art.

Good manners are not necessarily always formal or conventional or correct. They may often make themselves felt even through the difficult media of awkwardness and bad grammar. They have a syntax of their own, whose rules are apprehended only by the heart and transcend the inflexible usage of the academy. For them there is no such thing as the tyranny of custom. At the right moment, in the inspired mood, they may change the laws of etiquette (since they alone established them), they may overrule the decisions of punctilio with a look and alter convention with a word. Under the exigency of loving exuberance they may cast the dogmas of behavior to the four winds and enunciate a new rubric of procedure. Good manners can never fear innovations, for their very existence is based on the fleeting kindly intuition of the moment. They are fresh and refreshing as the morning, and original as the personality they clothe. The best and finest manners, however, always maintain distinction and originality through

a graceful adaptation to accepted code.

Good manners are a revelation of good feelings. To have good feelings and a desire to make them known is to possess the first elements of good manners. Actually to attain them, two things more are needed—a knowledge of usage and an adequate expressional skill. That is to say, in order to be well mannered one must have three requisites—the prompting, the understanding and the art. When these become habitual and instinctive they result in manners that are well bred as well as good. But this command of expression, which must supplement the generous wish before we can acquire the perfection of elegant manners, is something that people are wont to think of slightly as an artificial and superfluous accomplishment. As a matter of fact, excellence of expression is not less valuable than excellence of thought or intention. It matters little how kindly disposed you may be in your heart toward me, if you make me feel uncomfortable by your brusquerie or boorishness. Expression is as deserving of respect and cultivation, therefore, as the inward prompting of kindness itself. The best manners require not only a kindly spirit but also a plastic and intelligent body for their manifestation. And that is not to be had at its best without care, education and training.

To move and speak with all the convincing beauty of motion and purity of tone that the best manners imply requires culture of the body and voice. There may be a natural aptitude for these qualities in fortunate instances, but there must always be education as well. Rules of deportment have their uses, but they can no more produce good manners than an excellent recipe can produce a good pudding. The physical training which facilitates good manners also evolves the spirit of good nature which must underlie them. This is the real reason for the importance of a code of manners and a scrupulous insistence upon the keeping of that code. The best impulses which

arise in human instinct are thus made steady, effective and permanent.

Instances of the mighty power of manners occur all about us every day if we will observe them—both grotesque and beautiful. A young and beautiful American actress, both cultivated and well born, was recently entertained at a small dinner by her friends, in one of our best restaurants. She arrived in a flurry of smiles and welcomes and found a huge bundle of American Beauty roses beside her plate at table. Heaven knows what sentiment of appreciation she sought to convey to her hosts by the act, but she laid the flowers in her chair and sat on them throughout the evening. A more inept example of manners could hardly be imagined.

A few months ago we entertained a Japanese dignitary with much civic hospitality and among other notable places in the metropolis took him to see Grant's tomb on Riverside Drive. Instead of turning away when his visit to the resting-place of the illustrious dead was over, he came down the steps backward as a mark of becoming respect to so great a man. To our more abrupt and hurried way of thinking there may seem to be a touch of the fantastic in such an elaborate Oriental ceremonialism, but on a deeper consideration how natural and spontaneous we feel that tribute of reverence to have been! To be rude or inexpressive where some instinctive manifestation of gentle courtesy were more natural as well as more becoming is to stifle the springs of human courage and beneficence at their inmost source.

That a generous and general practice of good manners stimulates and disseminates fine aspiration, nobility of character and grace of living is truly beyond question; and until we come to have some more widely spread appreciation of that truth, not all our sterling qualities of heart and brain can save us from the consequences of our rudeness nor justify our arrogant infatuation with a mannerless age.

# THE WRONG FOOT

By Damaris Gaines

“A H, Vere dear, you won’t stay on if she stays, too?”

Mrs. Travell joined her companion on the rug with a haste that almost brought disaster to her teatable. Standing side by side against the fireplace, where the leaping flames defined them sharply in the dusky room, they were proved brother and sister by the same long, slender sweep of body-line, by the heavy, dark hair rippling back from the too-sensitive face, by the rare possibilities of tragedy and humor. Theirs was the greyhound type, finely organized, highly-strung. But a difference in the genius that moved them declared itself strikingly at that moment. In the one a nervous tension was expressed by tumbling, unconsidered words; in the other an increasing reticence and calmly-measured speech betrayed the inner disturbance. Swiftly the woman’s sentences rose to a crescendo of expostulation, all her body aiding in the argument—her bright, resentful eyes, the nervous hands flashing from gesture to gesture, the impatient movement of a foot.

“What is the use of your trying to shield her, Vere Blackmar?” she was asking hotly, maddened to a naked directness of words by seeing all her foam of indignation break upon his imperturbability. “We all know that she treated you outrageously, and you can’t deny that because of it you went off and knocked about Europe for two years. So I must say I think she would have shown better taste to keep away from this part of the country just as you were coming home.”

“She didn’t treat me at all in the way

you imagine, sis. Please try to believe that and let the rest go,” he rejoined in a voice neither over-warm in defense nor too indifferent.

Mrs. Travell sniffed. “I don’t know what you would call it, then—to lead you on with the sweetest, most convincing little ways. Why, I thought of course there was a perfect understanding between you.” At Blackmar’s movement of protest she hurried on to a climax of protestation. “And I called her my best friend! Why, she was the only one I could bear to see when Lal and I used to have our silly quarrels. Then think when we were first married how I asked her to the house every blessed minute, just for her sake and yours, when Lal was so cross not to have me to himself. But you should see the haughtily distant bows I give her now!”

Blackmar’s face had darkened during these reminiscences, had flushed from pale to red. As Mrs. Travell halted for a necessary breath he squared his shoulders and spoke with an impatience greater than hers behind the few slow words.

“You are quite wrong, Madeline. The fault was at my door. Carol was—Carol is, altogether sweet and desirable.”

Her open scorn was perfect as a study in expression. “Really, Vere, you’re absurdly chivalrous. One has the evidence of one’s own eyes and ears, I suppose. She did encourage you with a deceitful sweetness, and then she refused you point-blank. She had to admit that when I cornered her, a long time after.”

“You talked to Carol herself about

it? You poor, foolish child! How could you have done that, remembering how tirelessly you contrived to throw us together?"

"But I thought it was all coming out so beautifully then," she lamented.

"I don't know that I can blame you, for I thought so myself. However, she did turn me down flat, and she was right about it, too. I was distinctly brutal, my little sister."

"Oh, that, of course. Any man is when he invites a woman to accept all his worries and humor all his whims," Mrs. Travell quickly agreed, with a comprehensive turn of her slender wrists. "Nevertheless, we all take it as the highest honor a man can offer. And—oh, dear—I thought I knew Carol so well when I picked her out for you. I would have sworn that she would make you the darlinest wife!"

"In the name of mercy, Madeline, let us leave this sort of thing out! If you must be foolish enough to blame Carol, don't talk it over with me. I know she's dear and true."

Tears of chagrin stung his sister's eyes. "It sounds to me as if you were worse off than ever. And if you see her here now you'll begin all over again. Vere—dear, dear Vere—promise me you won't look at her. She doesn't deserve it and it will only harm you. I sha'n't have a minute's peace unless you do promise. It will be your only salvation." A coercive arm slipped into his.

Her distress at once softened and amused him. He set down his untasted tea and turned to her affectionately, though his words denied her consolation.

"Poor, long-suffering Maddy! I'm awfully sorry, dear, but your plans don't sound practical. You know you wouldn't have me run away, and I can't stay and be rude. If we happen to meet I'm afraid I must try to make her think a little better of me."

"Happen!" The word was a groan. "Vere, will you tell me just one thing? It might make her seem more endurable. Did you quarrel?"

The dark blood surged into Black-

mar's face again as he answered grimly, "We did not quarrel."

"I thought not. And that was the only shadow of excuse for her. It was simply——"

"My dear girl, if you are going to keep up this sort of thing I'm afraid a telegram will order me off in the morning. And I had counted a lot on our chumming around together again and having some rattling rides over these old roads. Hello, here's Lal! Now let us talk sense."

The rides that Blackmar pleaded for led without much maneuvering on his part or without any effectual barrier of his sister's invention to the little country club that offered a friendly focusing-point for the widely-scattered residents.

Not to yield to the club a certain proportion of one's daily intentions was to remain in a social non-existence. Here, then, the scornful lady and her blighted lover—so Mrs. Travell had ranged them in her exposition of the facts—came together under curious eyes, and even prejudice could not call it other than a casual encounter. The initial offense, thought Blackmar's sister, lay in Carol's tactless lingering in the same county with the man whose hopes she had betrayed.

Item by item his sister checked off the enemy's armament of charms, recalling with a pang of foreseen defeat the phrases she had once made about them. Who but she had first urged upon Vere's sense of beauty the adorable waywardnesses of feature; had matched Carol's eyes to the deep blue of wood-violets; had dwelt on the curves of that perfect mouth? But it was the frequent play of an ardent spirit in her face, the little warm rushes of life to the surface, that had once been her chiefest attraction for the woman now implacably set against her. Sometimes at sight of that face, whose clear candor she had once known by heart, Mrs. Travell had wondered if, after all, Carol's refusal might not have had its root in some genuine misgiving. But who could look at Vere's high counte-

nance or listen to the musical sincerity of his voice and doubt.

There was a something more than consciousness about their greeting that struck her then, a half-guilty manner, as of children playing an easily surmountable game; there was actually, as they caught her anxious look fixed on them, a half-shamed grin, quickly changed for a more conventional expression. Certainly the lady wore no flouting air. By one spontaneous impulse open for any to read, they moved to a distant seat and were instantly absorbed.

Mrs. Travell stared after them wonderingly. A common sense of humor had been one of the delightful ties between them, but why in a situation made up of unhappy elements was that mutually derisive smile permissible? She was to detect it often after that, when the glances of the three encountered, though frequently it tantalized her only from their twinkling eyes.

All that Mrs. Travell's too-easily accessible imagination had suffered in forebodings followed—and infinitely worse. It was inevitable that an *entente* reestablished with such facility should develop into a scantily-interrupted companionship. She worked as untiringly now to keep the pair apart as she once had to forward their meetings. Did Vere ask for the horses they needed shoeing; did he inquire for a spare afternoon with the touring-car it had suffered some not immediately reparable damage; her own engagements she endeavored to make his, and she had a plan ready to impose on him at an instant's notice. But in spite of all her carefully accumulated obstacles Blackmar walked with his siren, rode with her, golfed with her, read to her in perilous, rose-scented gardens and held all his evenings subject to her will. Again their relation to each other became an accepted fact among the little colony that had watched the earlier comedy. Mrs. Travell ground her teeth and fought for the mastery of her tongue. In spite of her pride she could not refrain from certain bitter thrusts as occasion offered. An amused sparkle

in Carol's eyes was the maddening and only result of an onslaught.

Toward her prey *La Belle Dame* was at first of a gentle friendliness, a sweetness that promised nothing and yet allured. Then, as if with a turn of the weather, a mocking lightness superseded. She still was sweet, but in a teasing sort of way, as if to parody the possibility of any earnestness in the situation. Occasionally an open snub bore further testimony to the absence of any sincerity.

With the change in Carol came the shifting of a mood in the faithful and twice-tried lover. As the weeks went by he developed a wincing super-sensitiveness to his lady's lightest gibe. Still doggedly devoted he grew moody and withdrew into such solitude as Carol's demands permitted. He tramped his room through the midnight hours, lost flesh and color visibly, and turned irritable to such a degree that Mrs. Travell frequently sought refuge and comfort on her husband's shoulder.

"To think how sure I was once that she hadn't a catty streak in her," she lamented to that patient confidant.

Necessarily she was brought to terms of outward truce with Carol. And once being left alone with her she choked down her pride and made a brief but pointed appeal. On the instant the provoking sweetness of Carol's manner broke up and her eyes shot revengeful sparks.

"Don't dare to meddle by as much as one word," she said tensely. "If you do I'll simply make mince-meat of him this time. Hands off, if you value that precious brother of yours, Mrs. Travell! As for me—I hate him!" And right viciously she planted her small heels on the gravel as she walked away.

This conversation repeated to Vere brought a burst of unfeigned laughter. It was as if he found some secret enjoyment she could not fathom.

"Yes, she's a perfect little fiend; there's no question about it," he agreed, with that satirical, altogether exasperating light in his eyes. "And I am a fool, but it was due me, my dear."

A climax is inevitable in a situation

of this sort. Mrs. Travell felt that the breaking-point of human endurance had been reached as she waited on the clubhouse steps for her brother to tear himself away and whirl her home before an impending shower overtook them.

He brought the car around hurriedly at last, helped her into the back seat and then paused. "We'd better give Carol a lift home," he said carelessly, his attention fastened on the working of the oil. "I hope she'll go; she seems a little stiff."

"Stiff!" Mrs. Travell breathed measureless scorn. "She was a picture of devotion half an hour ago."

"A picture of devotion"! I'd like to see one." Then his sister's allusion reached him. "Oh, bother! I'm talking about the machine. Carol's all right, but her cousin can't send for her now till after the rain lets up, and she wants to get home."

"Why doesn't she stay for dinner? She is ready enough to stay other nights."

"She doesn't care to stay," Blackmar said with quiet finality, and ran up the steps. "Madeline will be delighted," she heard him saying next, and then Carol was following him toward the big touring-car.

"It is so good of you to think of me," the girl purred sweetly as she slipped into the front seat.

There was nothing for Mrs. Travell but to take refuge in a disdainful silence, though the blackening skies at their backs made it difficult for her to maintain the desired aloofness. Shivers of dread ran through her as she glanced over her shoulder, for with the advent of a thunder-shower she became as a little child.

Blackmar sent the car spinning along on its five-mile run, but for all their racing the clouds were swifter. The lightning played about them with bright fierceness and Mrs. Travell lapsed into a pulpy, quivering thing, stripped of all pride and clutching alternately at her companions.

"Oh, Vere! Oh, Vere! Oh! Oh!" she shrieked with increasing anguish.

"Vere, let me get out. I know that all this awful metal draws the lightning. It's a regular death-trap. Oh, dear!"

As the first heavy raindrops fell Vere suddenly switched the car into a lane and flashed by a tumbled-down farmhouse to the great barn beyond. The farmer watching from its yawning doorway shook his head implacably as they halted.

"You needn't think, young man, that I'm going to risk your infernal machine in my full barn. You and the ladies can come in and welcome, but your automobile can take a wetting for all me."

Briskly they hurried to shelter. Mrs. Travell snuggled down in the hay with a cry of relief.

"If she only remembered how many barns are struck every Summer," Carol murmured in Blackmar's ear.

The farmer rolled the great door into place, shutting out the beating rain and the full violence of thunder and lightning, and they were left to the embarrassing intimacy of darkness and a solitude *à trois*.

For ten minutes they waited in the scented dark, the silence broken only by Mrs. Travell's low moans, Blackmar's mechanical word of comfort, and the soft crackles of the settling hay. Then the thunder slowly retreated and the sufferer as gradually recovered and sat up to smooth her ruffled plumage. In the pitchy darkness a vivid flash showed her that silent pair sitting hand in hand, and she dwelt with fresh bitterness on the shameless lengths of Carol's coquetry. Blackmar in that same illumination caught a glimpse of his sister's face and laughed with equal lack of shame. But he slid down to the barn floor and shook himself free from the clinging hay.

"I'm going out to the sheds and find that man and see what can be done about baling out our chariot. Otherwise, I am afraid we'll float home."

Both ladies wobblingly rose to their feet, appalled by the prospect of a tête-à-tête.

"I'll go with you," they offered



simultaneously, and Blackmar laughed again.

"You can't. The storm is still too bad for you, Maddy, and Carol mustn't leave you alone."

"I shall be glad to stay if I can comfort her," Carol called after him, with a provoking intonation that Mrs. Travell silently resented. In the light that Blackmar's going admitted, she met Carol's amused gaze with head erect and eyes of a frozen aloofness.

There was a rustle in the hay betokening resolution as they were left in twilight. Carol had suddenly leaned forward. "The play," she said, still with a light and smiling impertinence, "the play is almost over, and since it doesn't quite explain itself, I'd like to add a few words." Mrs. Travell, regarding her with a surprised stare, dimly discerned her odd pallor and hurried breath. There was an awkward pause before Carol spoke again, and through the attempted jauntiness her voice came shakily.

"It is only fair to me—" Another pause. Mrs. Travell hung on her labored utterance with a merciless curiosity. "The thing is peculiarly difficult for a woman to own to," Carol began afresh, "but since your brother has made such conspicuous reparation I find it easier to tell you that—it was—it was—Vere—who—who—threw me over that time." The color burned furiously to her forehead with the last jerky word.

Mrs. Travell gasped, then rallied. "Vere? Vere? What, Vere! The facts are rather against you there," she said, voicing the first broken thought that came. But she found herself trembling and clasped her hands tightly in her lap to steady herself. Across the dim, brief space they surveyed each other coldly.

"It doesn't sound quite like that knightly soul, does it? And who would dream of saying it could be your fault? Yet, without questioning your motives, which were all flattering to me, we must lay some of the blame of it at your door. Oh, I abetted you; no fear I can forget that! We did it together. Unfor-

tunately your ideas, Madeline, are always conceived in extravagant terms. You worship Vere, for instance, far beyond anything he deserves. And because you did me the honor to imagine that I was the one woman worthy of your idol——"

Mrs. Travell's claw flashed out viciously. "Yes, my imaginings are extravagant," she interposed. She seemed to see in instant vision the long vistas of an elaborate revenge.

No pettiness could divert the long-stemmed torrent of Carol's confession. "Well, my fair lady," she went on more easily, "the truth was this. You believed and you made Vere believe—temporarily. Most of everything, of course, from the very first moment of our meeting, there was a sympathy of understanding between us that misled me. We said so much to each other without the need of words that I fancied I read him all. Vere sought me, you sought me for him; whatever was ardent in his speech or look you verified by your unquestioning acceptance of it—you who had known him a lifetime! How could I doubt? I trusted you and so I trusted him." She drew her breath sharply. "Well, he proved quicksand. You, who knew that elusive spirit, yet led me on—I say the blame was yours!"

The little head held so high drooped suddenly in capitulation. "If Vere proved quicksand I am convicted. But no!" with a hopeful backward toss, "I know him better. Why, the boy was fairly mad over you! Where is your proof? He did love you!"

"I think he did. He thought he did!" Carol's lip curled at the weakness of her words. "We both believed that the subtle understanding between us equaled a betrothal—and we both knew it couldn't rest there. But dalliance and dreaming were sweetly suited to Vere's cloud-fancies; they were really all that he wanted. And, in consequence, as the moment of committal neared, when the actual words must leap out of the next silence between us, he found the future grim with fears. Your precipitation and my acquiescence wrought the mischief. I was

too patently made to order in point of suitability. He drew back at the very brink to ask himself if so tame an issue was the Great Adventure after all for one of his temper. And then, my dear lady, the knight found Italy suddenly imperative as an environment, ungallantly took to his heels, and left his idolatrous little sister to fight his battles for him. How whole-heartedly she did it, in the open and from ambush, I can bear witness."

"It was not because you sent him away?" Madeline spoke numbly, all her fluent phrases crippled.

"I knew less of it than you. We parted after a particularly—compromising walk in the Park. When I remembered afterwards what I had let my eyes say to him I could have torn them out. For months I was almost mad with shame. How do you think a girl feels when she finds that the revelation of her sacred self has driven a man to put the ocean between them?" Her beautiful lips writhed over the words, as if the thought still held for her an anguish of outraged trust. "How do you think she would like the world to know? Can you conceive the gentle and generous comments that world would make?—not on him but on her! Even you would have had your misgivings and trusted to Vere's fastidious instincts."

Madeline fluttered with suppressed interrogations. "Why—?"

"I know what you're going to say, but I haven't told you all yet. When I realized what had happened not a sign did I make to the world, and not a sign did he make to me. Your wild resentment was the only humorous element in that particular purgatory; the rest, my secret share, was torture, for a woman's pride knows all the tricks of the Inquisition. What survived is a damaged belief in the chivalry of man. I can never fully trust one again as long as I live." In the gloom her face showed stern and old.

The hope of an explanation seized Mrs. Travell. "You might so easily have failed to understand him, Carol. Vere is indirect; he hates bald state-

ments and undressed facts. Perhaps when you thought him talking vague, poetic moonshine about the needs of his soul—Vere told me positively that you refused him."

"I'm happy to say I had the chance—later. Oh, I knew Vere rather too well for that confusion. Besides—well, listen. When he had been six months away he weakened in the defiant self-defense of his course. Soon he felt constrained to write me to this effect: 'Being sure that you are still of the same mind, and knowing well enough what that mind is, I wish to do the generous thing, as I admit I did the craven, and will now forfeit my chance of liberty'—almost 'my hope of a hereafter,' he seemed to imply—'by asking you to marry me.'"

"That doesn't sound much like Vere."

"Oh, of course he put it with diabolically graceful roundaboutness, as he would, but that was the substance of it. How superbly self-centred! I could have killed him for each separate word. All I wrote back was that fortunately time destroys as well as creates illusions. I think that carried its sting."

"Of course you believe it was nothing to him," his champion said bitterly, "but I happen to know that you have broken his heart and the spirit of his work, and spoiled his life, and I——"

"There you go with your exaggerations again," Carol said a little wearily.

"The fact is that once snatched from the doom of being yoked to a ready-made soul-mate his protesting fancy could dwell on me calmly, and, contrarily, began to find me attractive as before. Being scorned he grew eager and woke to realize that what he had let slip was after all what he most longed to hold. I became a prize to be struggled for. Well, his efforts have at least had my applause. Unfortunately, all my advice to him to run away a second time has been in vain." For the first time since the opening of this strangely intimate dialogue she smiled.

"I can't help it—it was monstrous of Vere; I don't see how he could do it—but I think you are hateful." Made-

line choked. "You realize perfectly what it means to him this time. He simply worships your footprints now; he's utterly absorbed in you, and when you have extracted the very last drop of devotion you'll drop him as you would a squeezed sponge." Her face grew tragic, accusing, and her words for all her excitement rang a solemn warning. "But I'll tell you something you are too gleeful over your revenge to notice now, something you will remember all the long years when you have to get on without his worship—for, of course, it can't last forever."

"It will last long enough," Carol murmured, with recovered spirits.

"You'll want it, oh, how you'll want it! The emptiness will always be there and you'll find you can't fill it in with substitutes. Because this would have been a truly great love, worth all you've suffered to get it. More than almost any others I can think of, you two *belong*, and denying it can't change the truth of it. Lal and I, now, we've made something beautiful out of what we had, but we've had to bridge over several little gaps and pretend they never were there. But you could have absolutely satisfied poor old Vere's demand for inspiration and ideals and things. You'd have been everything to him in his life and you'd simply have made his work. As for yourself, you know best what he could have given you. If it weren't so you would never have been drawn together in the breathless way you were. I believe you care more for him today than you did then. Only your pride must have the right of way. You'll spoil two lives for the emptiest sort of revenge.

"After all, though it seems so dreadful, and though of course it made you suffer horribly, it was an understandable and not so unforgivable a thing. It's the intensity of Vere's tempera-

ment that made the trouble. A man who couldn't care so tremendously wouldn't have been bothered, but Vere must have been fairly bewildered by so—so—upheaving an emotion. He had to have it out with himself before he could attend even to you. The minute he stopped spinning around he pointed straight enough. Oh, Vere's the truest soul! I hope you'll have a lonely, aching old age!" She mopped savagely at her streaming cheeks.

"You're a good little sister!" Carol dropped from the tension with a laugh that was half tears. "Oh, Madeline, don't! I haven't the heart to punish you any more. I couldn't resist taking it out of you a little because you have clawed at me early and late. And oh, you have been funny in your upside-downness! But that's all over now." Mrs. Travell looked up amazed as the illumined face opposite flashed conviction even before the words. "Why, what subtler revenge could I take on your fine dreamer than to bring his cloud-riding divinity down from the skies and embody it in such an earthly me? There couldn't be any question about it. We always have belonged; that's all. You're clever to see that we have really been fighting ourselves and not each other. As for you and me," she put out a hand to check the rising torrent of incoherent joy, "let us get back to each other by degrees. We have gone too far to come back all at once."

But already the ice of months was melting. When Blackmar rolled back the big door and spoke with cheerful ignoring of any strain in the situation he found them with the close-bent heads of mutual confidence.

"The storm is over," was the prudent commonplace he had pronounced from the doorway. A second commonplace he added jubilantly at sight of their radiance, "and the sun is out."



# BALLADE OF FAITH

By Sylvia Florance

**K**EEP faith with thy dear dreams of days long past,  
Though with them come the bitter, poisonous pain,  
And torments of a love that did not last.  
Keep faith with outlived joys, though in their train  
Creeps Memory, whose white clothes bear the stain  
Of sins once sinned and souls made bruised and sore.  
From cowardly forgetfulness refrain  
And faithful be to Faith forevermore.

Keep faith with friendship, feasting or in fast,  
Nor seek to find a faultless Love. Disdain  
Comes stealing silently with looks aghast,  
To blight the lives of those who think to feign  
Indifference. Oh, let there ever reign  
Within thy graciousness that all adore,  
A bond of brave belief that knows no wane,  
And faithful be to Faith forevermore.

Keep faith! Through vigils infinite and vast,  
Eternal sleep thy spirit shall enchain;  
While worthless words shall wither in a blast  
Blown from good deeds undone and sorrows slain.  
And seeking paths celestial, thou shalt gain  
The cherished peace for which thou prayed'st before.  
Within thy heart this healing thought retain,  
And faithful be to Faith forevermore.

## L'ENVOI

Bind thou, fair Princess, in a silken skein,  
Thy yearnings and thy memories of Yore;  
Deem not the visions born of Youth were vain,  
And faithful be to Faith forevermore.



**M**ANY an angel in the theatrical firmament hitches his wagon to a star, only to discover that the star won't draw.

## LE 402-25

Par Charles Esquier

**A**LLONS, avouez que Paul Ryons est votre amant.

— Vous êtes fou ! fit Eva Vernay en haussant les épaules dans un geste hautain de pudeur offensée et de lassitude excédée.

Jacques Vernay, son mari, eut un mouvement d'impatience exaspérée. Un instant, l'homme et la femme, éternels adversaires, demeurèrent face à face, se défiant du regard, immobiles, silencieux.

On n'entendit plus que le tic tac de la pendule et le roulement lointain et ouaté par la neige de quelques rares voitures attardées dans ce quartier excentrique, voisin des fortifications et toujours désert, en hiver, à partir de sept heures du soir.

Il était dix heures et demie. C'était le jour de congé des domestiques, absents tous, à l'exception de Rose, l'ex-nourrice d'Eva, aujourd'hui sa femme de chambre, dévouée à sa maîtresse comme un chien fidèle et veillant en bas. Les maîtres étaient seuls dans la chambre à coucher de leur hôtel, et Jacques venait d'en profiter pour faire à sa femme, après un interrogatoire en règle auquel elle s'était à peu près dérobée, une de ces sorties violentes dont il était coutumier.

Depuis deux ans que le banquier avait épousé, par amour, cette jeune fille presque sans dot, jolie, séduisante, mais d'allures inquiétantes, l'incorrigible coquetterie d'Eva avait, en exaspérant la passion de son mari, perpétuellement tenu en haleine sa jalousie aujourd'hui exacerbée. En proie à cette gangrène morale, les soupçons continuels du malheureux se portaient tour à tour sur tous les hommes qui

pénétraient dans l'intimité du couple sans se fixer jamais sur aucun de façon définitive. La conduite de sa femme justifiait-elle ses méfiances ? Incomplètement, à la vérité, car, si les allures de flirteuse d'Eva inquiétaient Jacques, il n'avait jamais eu de preuves précises de trahisons consommées.

Cependant, il la sentait ondoyante, glissante, évasive... Cette fois, ses soupçons s'étaient fixés sur Paul Ryons, un de ses camarades de cercle, peintre de talent, qui avait exécuté d'Eva un portrait bien venu.

À la faveur des séances de pose, il s'était établi entre le peintre et le modèle une certaine camaraderie familière dont Vernay avait rapidement pris ombre. Camaraderie, amitié ou quelque chose de plus ?

Paul Ryons était de dix ans plus jeune que Vernay qui frisait la quarantaine, alors qu'Eva n'avait que vingt-quatre ans. Souvent, en voyant sa femme plaisanter avec le peintre, il n'avait pu s'empêcher de remarquer à quel point tous deux s'appareillaient. Il lui avait même paru surprendre dans leurs conversations certaines réticences, dans leurs yeux certaines lueurs particulières tôt voilées quand tous deux se sentaient observés par lui... Vérité ou illusion de sa jalousie naturelle en quête d'aliment ?

Lui-même ne savait.

Chaque semaine, ses affaires l'appelaient en province pour vingt-quatre heures, et durant ses absences, si Eva eût eu quelque velléité de trahison, le champ lui était largement ouvert.

Or, jamais Jacques ne s'était abaissé à la faire espionner. Pourtant, torturé par le doute grandissant, il n'avait plus

eu la force de dissimuler vis-à-vis de sa femme. Peu à peu, il s'était livré, mettant à nu son âme, s'attendant à une révolte indignée, à des accents sincères qui l'eussent rassuré devant l'accusation formulée. Mais Eva avait dédaigné toute justification, se renfermant dans un hautain mutisme. Trouble d'une coupable ou dédain d'une innocente blessée de l'outrage d'une injurieuse suspicion?

Comment le savoir? Comment pénétrer le mystère de ce visage charmant et fin; aux angles brusques, aux yeux ravageurs et passionnés faits pour le désir, la volupté et pour le mensonge aussi, peut-être?

Comment déchiffrer l'énigme de ce front bombé, étroit, têtu, où se tor-daient les serpents bruns des cheveux ondés et derrière lequel Jacques sentait une hostile volonté de silence contre quoi se brisaient ses efforts?

Oh! ce doute, ce doute affreux, lancinant, il en souffrait bien plus encore que d'une certitude même douloureuse qui l'eût poignardé au moins une fois pour toutes, mais qui lui eût permis d'user sa souffrance dans l'ivresse de la vengeance.

Par quel moyen arriver à une preuve décisive de l'innocence ou de la trahison d'Eva?...

Pure ou impure?

Comment savoir?...

Pour la millième fois, ces questions assaillaient son esprit quand retentit la sonnette du téléphone placé près du lit.

Eva, heureuse de cette diversion à la pénible scène, saisit les récepteurs et engagea la conversation. C'était une de leurs amies qui invitait les Vernay à une première, dans un théâtre à la mode, pour le lendemain soir.

En regardant sa femme penchée sur l'appareil, une flamme singulière brilla aux paupières de Jacques. La conversation terminée, au moment où Eva allait raccrocher les récepteurs, le mari prononça:

— Pardon, ma chère amie... Rendez-moi donc le service de demander le 402-25.

Eva se retourna, étonnée:

— Le 402-25? C'est le numéro de Paul Ryons.

— Précisément.

Surprise, Eva demanda le numéro souhaité; puis, se retournant vers Jacques, en attendant la communication:

— Vous avez quelque chose à dire à Paul Ryons?

— Non! pas moi! répondit Vernay d'un ton calme mais ferme qui contrastait étrangement avec sa violence précédente, mais vous.

— Moi!... Mais non! fit-elle avec un étonnement et une appréhension grandissants.

— Si! insista Jacques... Vous allez avoir l'obligeance de dire dans le téléphone, à notre ami Paul Ryons, les paroles que je vous soufflerai à voix basse, tandis que, placé de l'autre côté de l'appareil et tenant l'autre récepteur, j'écouterai ses réponses...

Eva éclata d'un rire un peu nerveux:

— C'est une plaisanterie, mon cher. Ne comptez pas sur moi pour me prêter à cette manœuvre presque indécate.

— Indécate? Pourquoi donc?

— Parce que cela constitue une sorte d'espionnage et de trahison. C'est pis que de décacheter une lettre ou d'écouter, aux portes... Enfin, c'est indigne de vous, de moi, de lui, de nous trois!

— Eva, je souffre tant! C'est le seul moyen de calmer ma souffrance, et, puisque vous êtes innocente, pour m'en convaincre tout à fait, pourquoi ne pas me donner cette petite satisfaction?

— Parce que vos soupçons m'outragent.

— Prenez garde! Je suis décidé à considérer votre refus comme un aveu de culpabilité.

— Et dans ce cas?

— Dans ce cas, je divorce et je tuerai Paul Ryons.

Eva eut un frémissement imperceptible et ferma les yeux comme si elle eût voulu cacher ce qui se passait en elle. Elle savait son mari violent, impulsif et capable, sous l'empire d'une atteinte trop vive à sa passion, des pires gestes de meurtre.

Cependant, la sonnerie de l'appareil retentit de nouveau... Jacques, d'une

main, avait saisi un des récepteurs et écoutait :

— Il est là ! Décidez-vous ! murmura-t-il dans un souffle.

Elle rouvrit les yeux et lut dans ceux de son mari rivos sur elle une résolution implacable. Résignée sous la menace, elle saisit l'autre récepteur et approcha ses lèvres de la boîte téléphonique.

— Allô ! Allô ! disait la voix de Paul Ryons.

Jacques glissa dans l'oreille d'Eva :

— Allô ! Allô ! C'est vous, Paul ?

Elle répéta fidèlement la phrase d'une voix un peu tremblante.

— Oui, c'est moi ! répondit la voix mâle ; est-ce vous, madame Vernay ?

— Oui.

— Vous êtes seule ?

Jacques fit signe que oui.

— Oui ! dit Eva.

— Et votre mari ?

Jacques dicta :

— Parti ce soir pour Londres ; les domestiques sont sortis.

Eva redit les mots avec effort. Paul prononça distinctement :

— Ah ! quelle joie, ma chérie ! Alors, je puis venir ce soir te retrouver comme les autres fois ?

Le bruit léger d'un baiser vola à travers l'espace.

Eva chancela... Sa main gauche, libre, se raccrocha, crispée, à la muraille.

Jacques, blanc comme un linge, souffla :

— Oui ! Viens à l'instant, je t'attends.

Mais éperdue, les dents serrées, les

yeux agrandis d'angoisse, elle fit de la tête signe qu'elle refusait cette fois.

Alors, elle sentit au front le contact d'un corps froid. Jacques, de sa main droite restée libre, venait de sortir de sa poche un revolver dont il appuyait le canon sur la tempe d'Eva.

Il ordonna, impérieux et sauvage :

— Parle... ou je tire !

Elle eut un grand frisson. Dans une épouvante, elle entrevit le drame imminent : son bien-aimé accourant, ivre de joie, éperdu d'amour, et pénétrant dans la chambre où elle l'avait déjà reçu quelquefois pendant les absences de Jacques, grâce à la complicité de Rose ; son mari guettant derrière la porte, revolver au poing, résolu au meurtre, et l'entrée de Paul souriant, les bras tendus vers elle, puis tournoyant, une écume rouge à la bouche, le front troué d'une balle. Alors, se raidissant contre la révolte animale de l'instinct de conservation, domptant sa crainte de la mort, dans un héroïsme d'amoureuse traquée dans sa tendresse, elle cria de toutes ses forces :

— Ne viens pas, Jacques est là. Il nous écoute... C'est un piège abomi...

Elle n'acheva pas.

Ivre, exaspéré de douleur furieuse et de voir sa vengeance lui échapper, le mari outragé avait pressé la détente. Le sang jaillit sur l'appareil et Eva s'abattit les bras en avant. Un flocon de cervelle roula sur le tapis, en mousse légère—

Quelque mois après, aux assises, Jacques Vernay fut acquitté.



## THE LATEST

"MRS. GOTROX gave an engagement dinner last evening."

"Indeed! In honor of whom?"

"The new cook."



SOME so-called friends are like burglar-alarms—they go off when there's trouble around.



# A RECONCILIATION

By Stephen Gwynn

A MAN and a woman were walking across Hyde Park on the south bank of the Serpentine. Neither of them was very young, and in the woman's fair hair many threads of gray showed already. In a few years it would be pure white, and she would be more beautiful than ever. So at least the man thought who walked beside her; so any painter, looking at the lovely bloom of her skin, the unfaded blueness of her wide eyes, would have justified him for thinking.

They walked easily and slowly, yet as if lingering a little on each step. If one could only see, there must be couples passing us now and again whose bodily atmospheres merge into one; who move, as it were, in a mist of their own making. Those are the people who are conscious of their own happiness, about each of whom the other's presence vibrates like musical sound waves. Very often they are not talking, or if they are it is not the words that matter.

Yet this man and woman were talking rapidly and intently, till suddenly she stopped, stepped over near to the water, and, tall in her gray dress, gazed out toward the bridge at the sunset reflection and the ambered trees.

"I love this place," she said. "Do you suppose it always looks like this? Are there ever real green leaves here? If I saw them I should feel a stranger—it wouldn't be my park any longer."

"It was like this seven years ago—five years ago anyhow," he answered, "and two years ago. That is all I can contribute to your natural history. But

very likely they stick those few yellow leaves on by contract. Nature has nothing to say in the business. Look at that grass; see how unnaturally green it is—and all because the tree trunks are one solid black."

"You shall not libel my park," she retorted. "It is lovely. It is London—the place of my holidays. And if you were at all nice you would remember it is the only place where you ever meet me."

His face grew suddenly tense; he had a trick of setting his front teeth together.

"Seven years ago, five years ago, three years ago." Then he laughed a little. "Oh, I remember that sometimes, out yonder at the station, when I think about London." Suddenly his voice and manner changed from the tone of reserve, half bantering, half resentful. "I tell you, though, what I remember here—here in London. I remember letters about mountains and clouds and sea and heather and bracken—and now you stand there and rave about black trees and unnatural yellows and greens."

"Well," she said quickly, answering his words, evading what was unspoken, "do you deny that this is exquisite—and so paintable? Wouldn't Watteau have delighted in it?"

She began to walk westward again, as if motion might shake off the insistence that was in his look—and in his voice when he spoke again.

"Watteau!" he said. "I meet you here among charming, well-dressed people, or in a charming, well-dressed arrangement of water and trees. But your letters are all about bare, ragged

hills and open skies and the smell of whin-blossom." Then his tone softened, almost to pleading. "If you are really going back next week, is there any reason why I should not come and see you in Ireland? I have six weeks' leave still before I must start for India."

Once more she answered with the same hint of a laugh; but under its ringing lightness a strain was felt. "Why will you talk about Ireland and going away? I want to forget all about those things. I am here for my holidays. I don't want to think about anything but holidays."

His face altered and hardened; the expression went out of his eyes. He had tried to come closer to her; she had set him at a distance—among the gaieties of the world, the holiday amusements.

"I'm sorry," he said, "I was stupid. Of course we won't talk about things that bore you." They walked on for a few paces before talk began again—not very different in its substance from the exchange that had passed so rapidly and pleasantly between them before she paused by the water. But if one could have seen—and they who could not see it felt only too keenly—the mist in which they moved was broken, the circling vibrations of their lives that had merged and blended before now scattered vaguely over space. Words were the only link left, each mind had an alien thought deepest in it—in his, resentment; in hers, perplexity and reluctance. So with little comfort they crossed out of the park, following the path on through Kensington Gardens.

But as they walked and talked the woman's answers grew more and more perfunctory.

"And so you really saw Dorse in it?" he was saying. "That was great luck."

"Yes, she was very good."

The words were toneless and meaningless. Then, abruptly hurried and half shamefacedly she spoke. "Please—I want to talk. Can't we sit down for a little? It isn't really cold."

The man's face altered slowly. He wasn't quick to thaw, but the change was like Spring's coming.

"There are two chairs," he said, pointing some fifty yards off. They walked over in silence, and as they sat down:

"Well?" he said.

"Please—I don't think I was nice just now. You are cross with me." She paused for a moment, but he answered:

"One doesn't always like to be treated just like a holiday friend."

"I didn't mean that," she cried, with a sharp accent of pain. "You know I didn't. But there are things it hurts one to speak of."

"And things it hurts one not to speak of," he retorted. There was mastery in his voice now. "Listen," he went on, "consider this. If I do not speak of them, I shall be away over there in India, and there will be questions I have wanted to ask a hundred—a thousand times. But I can't write and wait six weeks for an answer, wondering all the time whether I have hurt you or offended you. I'm not-inquisitive. But I have never pretended in all these seven years that we have known each other that you were the same as other people to me. And still I know less about your life than your most casual neighbors."

"That isn't true," she said. "How many people do you suppose know as much of me as I tell you in a letter? I'm not going to pretend anything, either, and a great deal of my life in these seven years has gone into what I wrote you. It seems to me you know all the things I care about."

He set his teeth together, and spoke doggedly, looking away from her.

"I only know that I want to know more. I want to see for myself what you have so often written about. What reason is there that I should not go and see you in your own house, as other people do?"

"They don't," she answered abruptly.

He looked at her in a kind of stupefaction. Then anger began to mount in him.

"Is it possible——?"

But she broke in on him.

"Oh, you needn't talk like that. I'm not boycotted, and I'm not shut up. I see my washerwoman and my butcher and my baker, and that sort of people. But outside of that, quite literally, I don't see anyone. I'm not making an exception. I'm only refusing to make one."

Her tone had grown hard and bitter, with resonances, as if many strings long drawn tight quivered within her. The man beside her felt new influences, new vibrations, bursting in, marring the peace of their atmosphere. He felt her snatched away from him by her bitterness. It was the first time that he came so near the trouble that was in her life; yet the joy in him was more than the sense of her pain.

"Listen," he said, "you are talking now of painful things. That is what I want you to tell me—that most of all. If you don't have friends about you—you who have so many friends here where I meet you—why is that? I know the beginning of the story—as everybody knows it who was in Delhi eight years ago—and that is all I know. I dare say I could have found out, but I never wanted to ask anyone but you."

Answering him her voice softened—in tune with his.

"You are good to me," she said. "I have often wanted to tell you about things. Only—it hurts."

"I know," he said. "Don't go on if it hurts too much."

"Oh, that is all; I have got over the hurting. There is no secret. When we settled down the people who came to call were not the people I should have wanted to know. That was natural when a man leaves the army under these conditions."

"There are plenty who would not think much the worse of him for it," he said half apologetically.

She answered with a flash:

"Yes. These were the people who came to see us. I did not go to see them again, because I felt that I should have agreed with the people who stayed

away. My husband did not take that view of it. He resented it more than I did. Of course, he had known most of them all his life."

"Why did you go there to live?" the man asked. Pain was in his voice, pain twitched in the nerves of his face.

"There was no other place. There was very little money, and there was this place of my husband's which we could not let. So we had to live in it."

"And you live there seeing nobody?"

"As my personal guests—nobody. I had rather, you know. It isn't that I like being a hermit. I hate it. That is why I like London. But I hate other things more."

He sat in silence for a moment, wrinkling his forehead. Then he spoke. "I don't understand—one thing. Surely Captain Despard keeps a pack of hounds?"

"Yes—drag-hounds."

"How is that done, when——?"

Again the hard note of resentment, of anger long nourished, vibrated in her voice. "How are things always done, when there is not money to pay for them?"

Again the spasm of pain distorted his face.

"I understand," he said. "That is why you want a holiday—and to forget."

She spoke now rapidly, with the utterance of one whose thought has long been pent up.

"I take my holidays always in October, because that is when the meets begin. You can't call it hunting. It is a form of horse-dealing chiefly. Do you know, I used to love horses more than anything in the world, and now I think I hate them and everything connected with them as the instruments of human degradation. I am afraid of them—for Morry."

"You needn't be, surely," he said. "Are you not there?"

"Ah, but you don't understand how hard it is," she cried. "I did my best, my very best, with the others, my stepchildren, and in spite of me they have grown up in the stable. It has been one long fight, and I have

been beaten. I can't afford to be beaten about Morry."

"You won't be," he said. "The child is too fond of you."

"Yes, he is. But what can I do? He wants to do as all the others do; he craves for it; it is in his blood. And I should hate to make a mollycoddle of him, and he would hate it."

"I see," he said. "It is very hard. I think you should let him ride as much as he likes."

"That means his being away from me, and with all the people I don't like to see him with."

"Why? I know you don't ride. But you used to. Can't he be with you?"

She shook her head.

"I haven't ridden or driven for years," she said, "except by necessity. My view is that we ought not to keep horses, you see. There is no money but my income. I have to do the paying; it is to me that the bills come. Certain things I refuse to pay for—food for the hounds, for instance. Other things I only pay for under protest—they are supposed to be paid out of the proceeds of horse-dealing."

He was silent for a moment or two.

"I never guessed at any of all this," he said. "Tell me, how much do your friends know—your friends that I meet you with?"

"Lucy Fenton knows, of course. She insists on the yearly visit."

"I hope your cousin may have all the good I wish her," he said gravely. "I suppose no one else knows more than I did."

"I have taken some pride in preventing anyone from knowing or guessing more," she answered. "And now that I have told you, do you know, I feel as if I had parted with something that I valued."

"You have given me your confidence," he said earnestly. "Are you sorry for that?"

"No. At least, I think not. But I feel as if I had somehow put myself out of my own power. I can't help it. I half wish we had not talked of these things."

"It had to be talked out," he said quickly. "Don't you see I felt all this lying behind? Something that I could only guess at. I could not be content unless I knew it. One has always the hope that one may be able to help."

"There is not any help," she answered. "Anyone can see that. Things may get worse, or one may prevent their getting worse. That is all."

He stared out for a while before he spoke. Then, still looking away from her, he said, in a constrained voice:

"We must talk this thing out, so that it need not be talked over again. You will let me ask—men who meet the consequences of a habit as Captain Despard has met them sometimes are lucky enough to pull themselves together. I gather that Captain Despard has not been so lucky."

"He has not been lucky in any way."

Her voice as she spoke the condemning phrase had no accent of condonation. It pronounced judgment without forgiveness. And the man who heard it realized to the full how unutterably this proud and gallant woman had been shamed and humiliated.

"Are you right, I wonder?" he said, and his eyes were still far from her. He spoke huskily, half audibly.

"How right? I don't understand."

Then he turned to her, speaking quickly yet with broken utterance.

"I mean are you right to go on with this? To go back to this degradation—for you know you think it is a degradation. You know it is tearing your heart to pieces—and this fear about the child makes it worse."

Her face whitened in the wind of his passion. "This is not helping me," she said.

"Yes, but it is. It is the only way to help. On your honor now, has your cousin, Mrs. Fenton, never urged you to turn your back on it? People can't be tied like galley-slaves."

"Can't they?" she answered. "Can't they, indeed? They can tie themselves past all releasing. But you are right; Lucy Fenton urged me to come away, years ago. It would have been easier

then, and more profitable, for I had not accepted facts. I was young, and thought I could alter them."

He leaned his head on both his hands, and spoke through scarcely opened teeth, out before him, as if impersonally.

"You are thirty-three years old, and you have half your life before you, and you mean to be dragged for all those years through every humiliation, without the hope, by your own confession, of achieving any good. You hoped, you say, and you tried, and you effected nothing. It is to me just as if you were condemned to live in a dirty slum, to be picking rags for your living. I can't tolerate it so long as I can help. I ask for myself that you should let me rid myself of this unutterable pain. Leave that place. Go and live in London, or wherever you like, with Morry. Let a share of your income, or the whole of it, be paid to your husband, and let me—I have money that is no good to me—let me give you once and for all what will replace it." He turned his face to her for a moment. "Stop, don't speak yet," he said. "You know me pretty well. I am asking nothing but this one privilege—to use my money in a way that will make me thankful forever that I had money to use. That begins and ends it." Then, with an abrupt change of tone, he said, "You are not angry with me?"

She was looking away from him, she also, though it was her custom to let her eyes be on those to whom she spoke. But at his hot words she turned and looked him in the face.

"Angry? No; but sorry. This is the end of many things."

"I hope to God it is," he broke in quickly.

"No; not that. What you say is impossible—impossible for you and me."

"It is perfectly possible," he retorted. "It is only impossible as nearly every simple, rational thing is taken to be."

"No," she said again. "You see I am not even trying to thank you.

I know you mean all you say, and I trust you. But it can't be. Don't you see that I could not take money from you? I know you very well, and I know you would not ask me to come and live with you. And yet I would far rather do that than what you propose."

"What kind of a curse is on money?" he cried fiercely. "I have earned money, and money has come to me. I haven't worked for money, but I have earned money, and I have kept it, as one does keep it, for uses. It ought to be power. Yet when there is a use for it—a living use, as if I could give you the help of my past life, you talk as if it would be a contamination."

She answered him wearily.

"Why do you put into my mouth what I never said, nor thought? You make things hard. I wish we had not talked. I knew I should be sorry."

"I tell you," he said again, "we had to talk this out, and we have not talked it out. You have not given me a reason."

Her voice changed now as she replied, and a note of danger, if he could have understood, came into it—the level tone of repressed anger.

"My friend, you have no right to ask me for a reason. You offer me what is impossible, and I say I cannot take it. You should not offer me what you would not take from me."

The reason why comradeship between men and women is so difficult lies in the difficulty of admitting a true equality. Man's desire for woman has many forms, but one of the most constant is the desire to feel himself the protector—the source of help and power. And in John MacNamara's mind that desire was the more masterful because in this way alone, as it seemed to him, could desire have its fulfilment. Imperiously, almost without courtesy, he swept aside her answer.

"That has nothing to do with it. It is difficult for a man. It seems to me that I am asking nothing but a friend's privilege—to advise you and to give you the means of taking my advice.

What you tell me is intolerable, and once you have told me you must expect me to try and put an end to it."

There was no concealment now of the anger in her voice.

"We can't be friends on those terms," she said. "Do you know what you are saying? You talk as if I had consulted you. I did not. You pressed me to tell you things because you were my friend; and I told you because I thought you would understand. It seems you have misunderstood, and so I am sorry we have talked of these things."

She had silenced him now. Resentment crowded in on his mind, filling it with pictures of his own good intention, his own self-abnegation, his desire to do anything for her, to ask nothing for himself. It seemed as if she were the incarnate cruelty, the coldest incomprehension. Dumb anger darkened his face, tied the utterance of his true thoughts.

"I'm sorry," his tongue said. "I suppose I was stupid. There's no use in talking any more." But his heart heaped reproaches on her; and she, given over to her own anger, hardly knew it. She got up from her chair.

"It's getting cold. Why do we stay here? I must be going to my train."

Through the fallen leaves and sparse herbage of the Gardens they walked along together, silent now, miserably silent. Each had unspoken on the tongue words of reproach and recrimination. Why had he persisted? Why had he failed her? It seemed to her, when she spoke of what had been so long unspoken, what, indeed, she had never before spoken of with such bitter completeness, that somehow there might be relief. The hope had not come from reason, nor in truth did she represent to herself the cause of her speaking. She had spoken, as he had questioned, because things had reached that point between them when any reticence is a pain. But she did not admit this to herself. He had failed in sympathy, in delicacy—that was how her accusation framed itself. In the

outcome she found, subject to a new access of revolt fiercer than she had known before against her portion in life, a new and passionate longing for freedom. His offer—the thought of it renewed her scornful anger. How completely he had failed to understand! She had looked to him for sympathy; he had offered her a cheque on his bank. Far, deep down in her, some primitive voice of woman was saying that this was not how a man who loved dealt with the woman he desired; that if, instead of offering her a provision to enable her to live in a manner according to his standards of decency, of respectability, he had come to her, not offering, but asking, asking her to throw her defiance to the world, and to come out into freedom with him, then, indeed, there might have been another answer; then at least there would have been no cause for resentment.

And he, meanwhile, was finding fault with her failure to value his perfect consideration, his care for her and for her child. He accused her of a conventionalism worse than puritanical—a total inability to comprehend. Yet, before she had always understood—understood as if by intuition.

He had this advantage in anger—that nature inclined him to silent wrath. They had not far to go now together, and it was she who must speak.

"You see," she said at last, "you asked me to give you my unhappiness. I did, and it has not made you happy. Did you think it would?"

Her voice, very beautiful and flexible, always had a power on him, and the turn which she gave her thought arrested for a moment the indictment which he was heaping up.

"If I thought it made you less happy," he answered.

"No," she said, "I don't think that. I didn't mean what I was saying. Forgive me, I was horrid. Truly, forgive me. All this has got on my nerves. I told you I felt as if I had given part of myself away. I can't get used to the feeling."

"Let me put you in your train now,"

he said, "and come and see you tomorrow. We shall understand each other then."

"Ah," she answered, "now you will be angry again. But truly, I mean this kindly and nicely. This has to be the end of some things anyhow. I can't see you tomorrow; if you please, I would rather not see you again before I go home. When you get back to India write to me. But let things smooth themselves over first."

Again his passion broke out.

"By God," he said, "that is what I will not consent to. I will see you again, and I will talk to you again of these things. I will not submit to your going back to that life without using any power I have to prevent you."

"If you mean what you say," she answered, "you will force me to get a wire calling me back at once. Do you want to drive me away from Lucy's? Listen," she said, pleading now, "this is the only thing I have ever asked seriously of you. Do not try to see me again now. Things are not so bad as you think. I will write and tell you. It will be good to know I can tell you whatever I wish to tell, and I shall always be thankful to you for all your friendship. Say good-bye to me now, here. Do not come any farther."

She stood there before him, holding out her hand, her eyes swollen, her face white and tremulous. There was kindness in her eyes; kindness on her lips; but there was also haste and fear. Looking at her he saw, and he knew vaguely his power over her—the power that was part of what she feared. Yet he could but do as she asked.

He took her hand.

"Good-bye, then," he said. "I wish to God I could help you."

Her hand was limp in his, and hastily she drew it from him.

"Good-bye. Now go your way, and I go mine," she said. "Don't stay there. I hate being stared at." And so, with a poor show of laughter, she parted from him.

Obedient to her bidding, he walked a few steps down the path. Then he turned. He saw her gray figure van-

ishing swiftly along the path toward the gate leading into the road; and as he watched it seemed that cords from the very sources of his life were drawing him after. She disappeared into the road, and, with a sudden revulsion, he set to running, with no clear purpose, perhaps for one last glimpse, perhaps to call her back to him. But when he reached the gate she had vanished into the traffic, and the road, with its multitudes, lay hateful as a desert before him.

## II

As MacNamara walked back to his rooms in Jermyn street his mind, at work with raging activity, accumulated on him arguments of his own mistakes. In this, in that, he had said wrong, done wrong—been stupid beyond utterance. To acquiesce in the result arrived at was far from his meaning. When is there acquiescence in another will's decision if that other will has only snatched at a momentary resolve? It was a relief to him, a vent for his unrest, to sit down and write to her—stating again his view—what he wished, what he offered—but above all imploring leave to talk matters over face to face.

A dinner engagement took him out, and he went gladly, eager to escape his own company. Yet once and again, while he sat and talked of this and that, the inner preoccupation of his mind would surge uppermost with a throb of pain. He seemed to be living through the minutes one by one, till he could hear from her.

In his rooms late that night he read over his unposted letter; it appeared to him absolutely conclusive, yet he added to it. All their relation seemed to stand out in preternatural clearness, and he wrote, saying all the things he had so often refrained from saying, yet always saying them with the same burden that he asked for nothing. Then he posted his letter.

Next day went in waiting for a reply. It is wonderful how long a day can be,



how hard when the mind is astrain with one expectancy, to settle down even to what may kill time. No reply came, nor on the morning after. He rued now bitterly a promise he had rashly given in his letter that he would obey her mandate religiously, so far as striving to see her was concerned. Forlornly, he paced about the streets and squares in the preposterous hope that he might meet her by chance. Still, it had once happened to him; he remembered that always.

Suddenly, as he walked, possibilities rose up in his mind. She might have telegraphed to his rooms, asking him to meet her, possibly at that moment; he might miss the message. The nearest hansom carried him back at full speed only to find blankness. Then he wrote to her again a short line asking for some sort of reply, good or bad, and he counted the hours till next morning. When no answer came he acted on a resolution formed in the night, and took the train for Ireland.

The craving for her, for her voice, for her presence, had grown almost unbearable. It prompted him to seek for any means that could give a reality to his thought of her. To hear her name spoken would have been a physical pleasure; to speak it, an emotion that would flush his face. But the possibility which now tempted him was to fill in the picture of her, to realize her life in her home. Whether it was pain or pleasure that he sought he scarcely knew; only that it seemed to offer an object of pursuit which was in some sense the pursuit of her. That night found him arrived.

Chance seemed to favor him; for not only were Captain Despard's harriers meeting the next day, but meeting at the captain's own hall-door. So the livery-stable's manager explained to his client, explaining also that his best horses must not be risked steeple-chasing after a drag.

It was early afternoon when MacNamara, on his hired screw, trotted slowly up the road to Carrigbrack, scanning the mountains of which he had heard so often, and desiring as if he

were yet new to desire the presence of the woman who had so often told him of the changing lights and colors upon them. An impatience that inwardly he half mocked at made him quicken his trot; he was eager to see her house.

He had not lacked directions, and the landmarks were easily identified—a couple of handsome, well-kept lodges to adjoining places—he wondered if these were the neighbors who had refused to call—and then the Despards' own gate and avenue. The drive sorely needed graveling; and when MacNamara came before the house its aspect seemed to him pathetic. Monthly roses climbed over it, carefully trained, a few pinkish blossoms still showing; but the plaster of the walls was flaked away in places—in curious contrast with the neat window blinds and curtains. Poverty overhoused was written large on the establishment. MacNamara had a rueful thought of the struggle such contrasts stood for, even while he was surveying the little assemblage already at the door before him—eight or ten riders in all. There was not a lady among them and, as MacNamara found himself noting, hardly a gentleman. About half he put down unhesitatingly for horse dealers or persons in their employ, the fat, pursy-looking men for dealers, the others, spare and battered, for members of that class which hangs round every centre of horse dealing in Ireland, men with the natural genius for managing young or difficult horses, and with the countervailing propensity to drink. As to the rest of the group, opinion might fluctuate in classification of them, but MacNamara, setting them in imagination before Marion Despard, had little difficulty in picturing her courteous and very distant recognition of their existence; yet he could see her quite otherwise, gracious to the rough rider with the sad eyes, who sat so splendidly on the nervous young chestnut, and made no attempt to mingle with the more assertive personages.

Meanwhile the other riders kept arriving, even a couple of hard-bitten damsels, workmanlike on their mounts;

and presently there appeared from the back of the house a small pack of ill-assorted, mangy, lank-sided hounds, whipped in by a boy who greeted and was greeted by the assemblage on terms that showed him to be the son of the house—a handsome lad, neither boorish nor vulgar, but stamped with that curious precocity and assurance which is the stable's hall-mark. Looking at him, MacNamara thought with a sharp realization of Marion Despard's fears for her own little son. Behind came a slovenly stable-boy leading a big, ill-groomed hunter who, for all his poorness of appearance, had an air of distinction all his own—that air of the wise, experienced animal who has for many years been on a friendly understanding with a man who knows his value. Beside this noble brown came a rough mountainy pony, girthed with a piece of rope, and carrying a girl of twelve, whose bright eyes and wild hair were covered by a red tam-o'-shanter.

At the same time a man in gray shooting-coat and close riding-breeches came down the steps from the hall-door. He walked stiffly, and one thigh was swathed in bandages; yet that stiffness seemed only to emphasize the natural suppleness of his figure. Every line about him spoke of the sportsman-athlete, born and made, to whom it comes natural to do all the things that men do for pleasure emulously, and to do them with a grace. His face, though well cut, was not striking. MacNamara thought to himself that he had seen it a hundred times in India; simply one of the half-dozen regulation types to be found in almost any British mess-room. Commonplace enough, too, was the slight general degradation of all the features in the blurring of lines, the dimming and suffusion of what, in a man of that age and figure, should have been clear colors and contours. What was rare and personal was that singular, almost feline, grace of movement, and the charm of ease of manner matching it.

Captain Despard was going through the group greeting every man, affable

and familiar. It seemed to the stranger who watched him so intently that every word and gesture emphasized by contrast his superiority. His old clothes made the florid stockbrokers look preposterously garish, but the difference was in things more essential. Accent, intonation, bearing, all stamped the finished man of the world among provincials. A curious pity filled MacNamara, pity and a kind of sympathy. He was looking at a broken man, a man damned and done for while still young and vigorous, and he thought he could understand the poor, self-justifying vanity which gave this outcast so manifest a pleasure in a society where he could feel himself not tolerated but admired; still something of a paragon. He was half inclined to deprecate the woman's judgment, of which he was in the same moment so painfully aware. No doubt a gentleman, in her sense, would not take pleasure in such tribute, perhaps would scarcely make the slightest concession, the shade too much of familiarity, necessary to earn it. But still, it was hard to grudge that poor consolation where so much had been lost.

Sense of jealousy there was none in MacNamara. It was merely as if he studied a chapter in the past, where he had come to learn the present. The attraction that had been in this man for any woman was so evident, not less evident its utter disappearance for such a woman as Marion Despard. This man, indeed, was the source of her calamities, but the very sight of him showed him so palpably for the mere sport of fate. And MacNamara, living, as people live throughout the East, in enforced proximity to all manner of types, had adopted the current judgment on these—the commonest of all the misfortunate—the "no man's enemy but his own." His other more intellectual nature had come to take for granted their lapses into temptations that for himself did not exist.

The same excess of the intellectual which had rendered him capable of idealizing his feeling for Marion Des-

pard till the physical side of desire was hardly felt saved him from any physical realization of her union with this man. Deepest in his mind lay perhaps a sense of relief to know that if a slave she was always voluntarily a slave; this man's light nature could never have mastery over her.

Meanwhile one of the sportsmen was gathering the field money, and a servant had brought out glasses and decanters, from which the master of the house was dispensing hospitality. Captain Despard approached MacNamara, whose horse stood a little apart from the rest.

"Let me bid you welcome, sir. We're always glad to see a new face at our little meet," he said.

MacNamara thanked him, saying something of the chances offered to a stranger.

"Oh, we're nothing if not hospitable in this country. Take a glass of cherry brandy," he added, half filling a tumbler. "You won't take it? You're right. A man is as well without jumping powder."

"I don't suppose it will be a question of jumping powder for me today. I'm really out as much to see the country as the sport," MacNamara answered. He had a curiosity, that was half sympathy, urging him to hear more of this man's voice.

"Well," said Captain Despard, indicating the mountains, "take a look round you now. You won't meet a finer view anywhere. And I hope, once we are off, we won't give you too much time to be studying the landscape. I think we might be moving now." He walked on to where the brown horse stood, and tried stiffly to reach the stirrup. "This leg of mine is fairly crippled," he said. The hunter fidgeted a little, sliding away. "What, Rover, for shame! Are you making a fool of your old master?"

All the natural pleasantness of the man's voice was in the caress of the words, and again MacNamara felt positive liking rise up in him. The horse stood now like a rock, and the master mounted, settling himself into

the saddle with the devil-may-care grace that so marked him.

"Now, Fred," he called to his son, "you may put them on to it. It's laid from the corner of the plantation."

Out through the yard they trotted, into a sloping lawn, much covered with bracken. Then, as the mangy hounds caught on the scent and began to race, there was a scamper away down the lawn, across a little stream at the bottom, over loose bushes, between gate-posts (taking the place of the vanished gate), across a corner of heath and whins, and out into the road by a gap in the long enclosing wall. The gap was narrow, and enough of the wall remained to suggest to MacNamara that his mount had no predilection for jumping stone. The next twenty minutes amply confirmed that impression, and he found himself far in the tail of the field, keeping company with a podgy dealer on a fat horse, which, as its rider asserted at every ditch to all within earshot, had never crossed country before. MacNamara had got tolerably clear of this voluble gentleman when another wall, low but evidently solid, completely checked his career. The dealer, scrambling up a bank into the road where MacNamara was flogging with energy, looked at the obstacle, and without hesitation turned along the road to the left, assuring the stranger that he knew the line old Paddy would take as if he saw him legging away before him. MacNamara, to whom the whole affair was becoming like a bad dream, decided to follow, wondering, as he did so, why he had come out, why he went on. Yet he went on.

The road turned again, and the dealer galloped hastily up it. MacNamara was trotting after him when across some hedges he saw the rest of the field brought to a check a little distance off in a laneway, and saw also the dealer slacken, officiously waiting for him. As he approached, young Despard came along the road toward them, the little girl riding beside him. MacNamara was in time to hear an exchange of words between him and

the fat man. "My horse overreached himself, and I'm going home, taking the kid, too. Her gray's had enough. Oh, yes, there's a great slanging match on; they're just commencing."

The dealer struck his horse with the whip.

"I wouldn't for a pound miss hearing the captain when he gets going," he called back as he cantered off. And as MacNamara came after him, raised voices began to be audible, and soon he heard with unwelcome distinctness the master of hounds in altercation with an angry peasant, who, standing behind a gate, spade in hand, launched his reproaches.

"Sportsmen, is it? A pack of drunken blackguards, trampling and destroying. Not a foot of yez shall go on my land. Aye, I dare ye to. Into the court I'll dhrag ye, as sure as ye venture it. The day's past when the likes of you could do what you liked with the likes of me. I'll have a writ out against ye for damages, and where will you find the way to pay me? Tell me that, me bold captain."

Captain Despard stirred his horse into a walk, and as the hunter began to move, and the hounds also padded beside him, he turned in his saddle and launched at the surly farmer a volley of language such as a drunken fishwife uses to a policeman. MacNamara felt a wave of physical disgust, intensified by the sight of the fat horse dealer rubbing his hands and chuckling. It gave the man away so completely, made such hollow pretense of his easy bearing, his fine pose of the soldier and the gentleman. And as if the exposure were not complete enough, the farmer answered vulgar scurrility with scurrility not less offensive, hallooing down the road, "Go out of that with you, you beggarly bankrupt, you swindling horse jockey. We know you, we could buy and sell you, only you're not worth it."

And again the master of the hounds, stretching far round in his saddle, yelled back abuse. And again the horse dealer chuckled and rubbed his hands.

Once more MacNamara had the sense of another judgment than his own asserting itself; but this time he pushed the thought away as too horrible. It was inconceivable that Marion Despard's husband had ever shown himself before her in such colors as he had then displayed before every casual stranger. And yet, was it conceivable she should not know?

Almost automatically he trotted along with the rest over a mile or so of road till the trail of the drag was picked up again, and then he flung himself with passion into the gallop, a racing burst over five or six fairly open fields with banks, where his horse carried him freely, and for a moment there was forgetfulness. Then again came a check; half-a-dozen riders now were stuck before a really big wall of loose sticks and stones filling a gap between dense hedges and plantations. A couple of light-weights, well mounted, went on after the hounds, but there was considerable delay. At last the master appeared, shepherding a couple of stray hounds.

"Where's the pack?" he shouted. "Fred's left me, and I had to bring on these."

Getting his answer, he looked at the wall, then, pulling to one side, "Clover does it," he said. The old brown horse wedged himself between two thorn bushes in the hedge, jumped between a couple of larch-trees, with barely space for his passage, then went over a double at the other side and away. Everyone else went and considered the place, but decided not to risk it; while the dealer on the fat horse, having alighted, was industriously knocking down the wall. It proved so solid, however, that by the time a passage was effected hounds and master were far out of sight. The momentary excitement had died out of MacNamara, and he turned his horse on the road.

As he plodded slowly back, thoughts that the semblance of purpose and occupation had kept at arm's length rushed in and made their own of him. He had come, he had seen—to what

end? Could he avow his coming? Could he go on and write to her, concealing that he had come? Now that he had come, that he had seen, he could realize why she had bidden him stay away. It seemed that here was a new cause of displeasure, a new jarring of their harmony, which—worst of all—must make itself felt when there was no power of meeting face to face. What would she think of it when he told her what he had done, and how should he tell her? In the meantime, within a few miles of him, at Carrigbrack, the woman of his thoughts sat in her chair, twisting a handkerchief in her hands, white with anger.

Marion Despard after that meeting in the gardens had gone back to her cousin's house, had passed a night sleeplessly, and in the morning had been confronted with MacNamara's letter. The whole effort of the previous day, the whole struggle of the past night not only to regard her decision as final, but to desire that it should be final, had, it seemed, gone for nothing. There was to be no chance of escape, no respite. Yesterday there had seemed to be a week more of holidays into which she threw herself with delight; today, holidays had ceased to be possible. Nothing was worth doing. Whether Lucy formed conjectures or not she did not care. Lucy was always a good friend. So she simply told Lucy that she was going home, and went that night. Home-coming was only a mockery of the name, she went about for two days with her heart one dull ache, carrying everywhere with her the letter which she would not answer. His second letter, forwarded by Lucy, reached her on the morning of the meet. It transformed the ache into sharp pain. It made her angry, since Lucy's conjecture was bound now to take definite shape; but that was a trifle. She longed wildly to know if he had departed from his promise of not calling; yet could she write to Lucy to ask that? The mere pressure of pain drove her into action; she could not maintain a mere passivity; she decided to write to

him. That she would do so when the house was quiet, after the riders had come and gone; till then she proposed to spend the morning in her garden, keeping out of the way, after her usage on such occasions. But the preoccupation of her mind drew her. She went in, and upstairs to her own room. There she began to write. The letter was difficult; time slipped by while she wrote, tore up, wrote again. She wrote till the horse-hoofs were heard on the gravel below her. The sound awakened in her, as if by a mechanical trick of association, her old resentments. Then she became gradually aware that the stimulus of these new pains had left her dead to the old feelings. She could no longer feel indignation against horse and rider and all that stood for part of the way of life which she detested. All these vexations seemed now slight and trivial. Mere curiosity drew her, and going to the window she looked out. As she did so she saw MacNamara riding up the avenue.

The shock struck her full. She put her hand up to her throat, and a cry half uttered itself; then she recoiled a little. Her first, her full belief, was that he was coming in spite of her command, in spite of his promise, to see her, and—how can he? she thought. What was she to do? How could she receive him? Above all, on that day. Not till he pulled his horse to a stand among the reeds did she realize his errand, only by slow degrees it dawned upon her; he would not ask for her, she had no need to refuse to see him, she need not speak to him; she could not speak to him unless she sent him down a message, which was impossible. She could do nothing. And, as she realized all this, the whole flood of her emotion converted itself into anger. He had disregarded her wishes; he had come to spy out for himself the nakedness of the land; he had made his occasion out of the very thing she hated. Her passion seemed more than she could bear. She turned away from the window; she sat, she stood, she raged, and yet desire drew her again

to look at the man whose presence she craved now so that she could not even disguise to herself the craving. To see him there and not to go down and speak to him, to know that he would go away, perhaps forever—all this was torture, and the very sharpness of the torment added to her anger. She saw him watch the group of riders, the boy, the girl, and her sense was quick to interpret the motion of his face. Then she saw her husband come out; she saw MacNamara watch him and as she, too, watched, every little excess in the manner of the man she had married seemed to stand out glaringly, and she hated this other man for standing there to look on, to see and to know. Had he no shame? she thought.

She saw Captain Despard offer him the drink, she saw MacNamara refuse it. She thought how in MacNamara's mind there must rise up thoughts of club talk in Delhi, telling how George Despard had been broken for drunkenness. The pain of it all set her brain reeling. Then she saw them ride away. And as the man whom she had sent from her side in London disappeared with the rest she felt a mad desire to cry out after him, to run and detain him, to speak with him at all costs. All the pith and marrow of her life seemed to go with him, and the more she felt this power the more deeply she resented it. She remained there silent, not moving, only twisting her hands in dumb rage, thinking, thinking, heaping up the count of an imaginary indictment till MacNamara's offending had swelled as if earth scarcely held another man who had so wronged a woman.

Meanwhile MacNamara, jogging back along tortuous roads, busily pictured her in London, perhaps at a concert, perhaps dining with her cousin. The thought flashed across him that he might easily have met her in the park by accident, if he had stayed in London instead of coming on this cursed expedition.

His track now debouched into another leading toward Carrigbrack. He began to recognize the fields over which they

had ridden out a couple of hours earlier. And then, as he turned into the main road, he saw before him the hounds and three or four riders, with Despard on his brown among them—they also jogging back. The hunt had swept round so as to finish near home.

MacNamara dropped into a walk, keeping his full distance behind. He could see only a little before them the wall of Captain Despard's place; he need not pass them. So, slowly, he followed for about five minutes, revolving bitter thoughts. They were alongside the wall now, and he saw Despard stretch out his hand to the nearest rider. Of course, they were going in over the gap in the wall, and as he watched he saw the master pull the left rein, touch his horse with the right heel, and with the little theatrical air that so marked him half turn in the saddle to say good-bye as Rover rose to the jump. In the same instant he saw a hoof catch in the narrow gap, heard a crash, saw horse and rider disappear, and in a moment saw the horse on his feet, shaking and excited. He saw the group of men push over to the wall, peering through. He saw one dismount hastily, flinging his rein to the nearest rider, and scramble over the gap. MacNamara put his horse to the gallop and joined the group.

When he came up he saw Despard lying on his back, the other men bending over him feeling his heart. He saw the body lifted a little. As it was lifted the head dropped slackly to one side.

"My God! he's killed," said someone.

### III

THERE was a sudden stillness. The fat dealer uncovered himself and said rapidly, "May the Lord have mercy on his soul."

Then the doctor spoke.

"Is there any house near we could get a door off?"

"Nothing nearer than his own yard," answered one of the others.

"Then let you go there, some of you, and have one brought. And you

must break this to Fred. He'll never stir again."

"Poor Fred," said one. "He'll be badly cut up. It's a poor thing he comes into, I'm afraid."

"I beg your pardon, gentlemen," put in the dealer, "but what about the captain's wife? Who's to tell her?"

MacNamara's heart leaped suddenly and strangely. Was it possible? But one of the group answered that she was in England.

"She is not," said the dealer. "I heard she came back yesterday. And surely someone must tell her."

"Begad," said another, "that's a job I wouldn't like. I'd be frightened to go near that one."

"It's little she'll fret, I'm thinking," struck in a second.

MacNamara's brain was whirling. But this talk decided him. He could not stand there while this pack of squireens and jockeys discussed Marion Despard. He moved his horse forward.

"I know Mrs. Despard," he said. "I met her in London only last week, and if you think it desirable I will go and break this to her as best I can."

A heavy constraint seemed to fall on the group; there was instant agreement, and a sudden shy silence followed. MacNamara paused for a moment.

"You are absolutely certain, sir, I presume?" he said to the doctor.

"Faith, you may come and see for yourself, if you like. There can be no mistake about a broken neck. O'Reilly," he added, speaking to the dealer, "let you go down with this gentleman and be getting the door off one of the loose boxes."

The two cantered off.

"We needn't be taking that jump," said the dealer. "'Tis no length round, and, mind you, I would be against putting this horse at it. 'Twas an awkward place, though the poor captain thought little enough of it. Man, if you saw the places I saw him clear! But his leg was against him today. He had not the grip with it."

So he babbled on, MacNamara hearing with his ears only, intent on

what lay before him, fear uppermost in his mind. Now that he had taken this on him he wished he had never spoken. Then a name caught his ear.

"It's well there was someone that knew Mrs. Despard. She never liked the hunting. Sure, it was the talk of the county she always tried to hold back the captain. But you might as well try to hold a river, poor fellow! Many's the time I advised him myself. Here's the gate now."

They slackened speed for the avenue, and MacNamara felt his heart sink. Beating in on his mind was the thought that fate had removed all bar between him and the woman he loved, and that, by his own foolish act, he had built up another, and perhaps now his folly was to culminate. Yet perhaps—there was always a faint possibility—she might be grateful. Hope flickered, and with hope sprang up the desire for a sight of her.

He dismounted at the door and rang, after tying his horse to a tree. The dealer vanished to the yard.

"Go and tell your mistress," he said, "that Mr. MacNamara must speak with her. It is urgent. There has been an accident. Tell her that."

He was shown into a room where everything spoke to him of Marion Despard, and in a moment she was there, standing in the door. Her black dress emphasized the whiteness of her face.

"What is it?" she said. "Why are you here?"

She stood at a distance from him and did not say any word of greeting. He felt the words choke him as he tried to speak.

"There was no one else there willing to come and tell you. Captain Despard has had a fall from his horse."

"What?" she cried. "Speak out. Tell me. Is he very badly hurt?"

Again he made a struggle to articulate.

"There is no use in disguising things. He is dead."

She swayed on her feet—put out her hand to a chair to steady herself. Then suddenly she stood erect and her



eyes grew hard and fierce, though her lips trembled. Forces that she could neither control nor recognize made their sport of her. It seemed to her that she was tossed to and fro, ignominiously buffeted—she, who had been so proud. All she knew was the mere desire to inflict some of her own pain on this man who was the cause of all the tumult.

"And it is you who come to tell me this," she said to him, her voice unnaturally quiet. "Why are you here? You have come where you should never have come, and you have brought ill-luck with you. I can never forgive you. Go now, go at once."

Even as she spoke she saw his face; she knew the blow she was striking. Where she stood he must pass her to reach the door. It was more than she could bear to let him go by her. She threw herself into a chair, turning her face from him. He paused for an instant, wishing to speak, but she made no sign. He walked to the door, and his feet seemed leaden weights under him. Then he turned and came over to her chair.

"There is no use talking now," he said. "I will not ask you to forgive me now. If you ever want my help I will come to you wherever I may be."

But she sat looking straight before her. "Go," she said again, "go. It is all you can do."

He went out then, heavily closing the door behind him, and as she heard it close tears began to run down from her eyes, but there came no sobbing. After a minute she rose up, went to the window, and saw MacNamara riding slowly down the avenue. Then she pressed a handkerchief to her eyes, composed her features, and went out to face the world.

But in the hall a sound of sobbing checked her. There, on the lowest stairs, was her little stepdaughter in abject grief, crying, crying. Marion went over to her, knelt beside her, and took the small hands.

"Kitty darling," she said, "be brave."

The child lifted her head and drew away her hands.

"Let me alone. You never cared for him."

The words came like a stroke on Marion's inmost heart. It roused her out of her own preoccupations. It began to restore the balance of her spirit which had that day been so cruelly shaken. Ceasing to think of herself, she began to be herself again.

Sitting beside the child she spoke gently, making no attempt to take her hands.

"I cared a great deal for your father long ago," she said. "Then things changed, and it was not all my fault, you know. But it was my fault, too, and Kitty, you know I always loved you, and your place is with me now."

"I would rather be with my daddy," cried the child. "Oh, far, far rather." And again the sobs began.

Marion thought for a moment.

"Tell me, Kitty, what do you mean? Where is he? Mr. MacNamara only told me what had happened."

"He is over at the gap in the wall on the road. They are bringing him home. Fred has gone, and I wanted to go, too, but they would not let me."

"Will you come with me?" said Marion, rising. "Only, Kitty, you must be as brave as you can."

Together, and hand in hand, the woman and child walked out into the big fern-grown field. As they entered it they saw at the bottom of the slope a strange procession coming—four men carrying something on a door, in front two or three riders, and the hounds following, while behind the bier walked the big brown horse, mud-stained and riderless, without a hand on his bridle. At the sight the little girl flung away from Marion and ran headlong down the field. Marion, walking swiftly after her, found the body laid on the ground and men standing by, while the child, in a paroxysm of sobbing, was flung on the dead man's breast.

Marion raised her in her arms. "Come, Kitty," she said, "you must let them go on before us." And in

silence the dry-eyed woman and the sobbing child waited kneeling while the body was raised again and carried forward. Then they, too, followed on to the house and up the stairs. On the landing the men paused, but Marion quickly opened a door.

"In here," she said.

And they laid the dead body on the bed in her own room. Then the men withdrew, and Marion and her step-daughter were left alone. The child immediately flung herself down in a new access of sobbing, but Marion checked her.

"Listen, Kitty," she said, "I want you to do this for me. Go and bring Morry here. I should like him to see his father, and I cannot leave you here by yourself. Bring him to me in a little while."

In a few minutes Kitty was recovered enough to undertake her errand, and Marion, dry-eyed and busy composing the body, removing from it all that might shock the eye of her little son. While she still worked a knock came at the door, and Fred Despard was there. Marion noticed, despite the trace of tears on his face, a new look of self-assertion.

"Will you give me the keys?" he said. "I want some whisky for the people below. It is the custom, you know."

Marion shook her head.

"You know, Fred, it is against my rules."

"What have your rules to do with it?" the boy retorted. "I am in my father's place, and I have to do what he would have wished. You know very well he would not have liked to see an insult put on them, or a bad name left on this house."

Color rose in Marion's face.

"We won't discuss it, Fred. I will do as you wish today, for the reason that you give. But I will do it myself."

She went downstairs and presently she came to the surprised assembly with a servant bearing glasses. Bare-headed and grave in her stateliness, she came among them.

"Gentlemen," she said, "you were my husband's friends, and you have done him the last service you can. Will you accept this last hospitality from him?"

The maid, filling glasses, went round and offered them to each. Nervously some accepted, nervously others refused; but when the glasses were emptied all took their way to the gate, wearing a crestfallen air. In the hall Fred spoke angrily to his stepmother.

"It was not your place to do that, mother; the people will be wondering at you."

"I'm sorry, Fred," she said, "but I think they will understand."

The boy turned away sulkily and grumbling. Marion went upstairs, and there found her own son hushed and awestruck outside the door. She led him in. She bade him kiss the cold forehead; then, with a sudden access of emotion, she flung her arms around him and kissed him herself again and again. The little boy, half-frightened, began to sob. Marion turned to Kitty.

"Take him to your own room, Kitty darling. Leave me. I want to be alone."

#### IV

MARION DESPARD stood long by the bed looking at what had been her husband. Not for years had her eyes so dwelt on him. A quick glance of recognition or of anger had sufficed these many months past. Now, as she scanned the dead face, two lives seemed to her to come up for judgment.

A thought struck her, and she went over to a drawer, searched in it, and drew out a photograph. Holding it in her hand she came over and stood once more beside the bed.

"He was never quite like that," she said to herself, half aloud. It was a sentence of apology. Despard's face, with its regular features, its lack of all the subtler beauties, had always lent itself to photography, and the old portrait emphasized to her the pitiful wreckage made even by a dozen years.

"He was lucky," she thought,

"lucky in that one thing." Death had come, undesired, yet most desirable in the eyes of any who could see the slope down which this man was so far fallen. And now death, having done its work, for a final clemency added to the dead face a dignity which was wholly lacking in the florid portrait. Marion Despard felt herself arraigned in that solemn presence.

He lay there, indeed, who had been her worst enemy; who had done worse by her perhaps than by any living soul. He had persuaded her to link her life with his at its first blossoming, and what a ravage he had made of those twelve years! Yet, was that the whole of it?

Many scenes from a far-off past flashed up before her, and she herself was the central figure, acting there, from what motive? She saw a girl's vanity, the quickened sense of power realized when the handsomest man, the most admired, in a crowded station neglected everyone and everything to pay his homage to her young beauty. She saw the first dawn of a woman's instinct when this man took occasion to give her his confidence, to present the story of his life, of his troubles, of his fears for his young children. (The story, she knew now, had been delicately shaded, but that did not alter essentials.) She saw her pride nourished by the perception of mastery. Even from the first she had known hers to be the stronger nature, with more than a mere intellectual superiority. She remembered—how vividly—the man's actual wooing, his appeal to her compassion which flattered (as she saw it now) her spiritual arrogance. The very risk had tempted her, the cautions which she received in plenty had only stimulated her purpose. She constituted herself his champion against all the world.

The judge in her laid a heavy finger on the fault. That was precisely where she had failed him. She had never really stood with him and by him. She had never forgiven him that open disgrace brought upon herself and upon her son through him. She had justified

herself always, she had always assumed herself to be justified on the ground that he had been false to his covenant. Was her expectation, her forecast of what he would become under her influence, then a covenant? Was there no covenant of hers that she would make him and keep him the honorable man that he desired to be? If he had failed in his protestation to her, then she had failed no less in that assurance to herself on whose strength she had dismissed all warnings. Yet when the crash came it was his failure only that she judged. Beside his dead body she knew now that the need for forgiveness had been mutual; that she had denied him charity; that she and not he alone had helped in the ruin which now death had mercifully cut short.

For the first time tears came to her. She knelt beside the bed, she took his cold hand, she pressed her lips and her forehead against it. But the accusing voice within her was busy. She was forgiving him now because he had set her free, free to find happiness. Indignantly she cried out within herself that she had no such thought, that she had within this hour banished happiness, shut the door upon it. She would take no happiness upon such terms. She would devote her life to mending the harm she had done. She would make up to George Despard's children all she had not done for George Despard.

As the thought shaped itself, there came a new torment, a new apprehension. Was she again counting too far upon herself? Kitty, perhaps; but what of Fred? She recalled that collision of their wills. She had won, as she had so often won against his father; had the victory been more than an assertion of her mastery? She felt a sinking of the heart, a craving for help, and suddenly the thought that she had been working in darkness, forced away out of sight, sprang up into ascendancy.

Help was forthcoming, help in full measure. She knew this man, John MacNamara. She knew now, as she had never known before, that she trusted him utterly and completely;

she knew the fulness of his devotion to her, and she thought now of how she had rewarded him for it. Once and again he had acted and spoken otherwise than she desired; otherwise than she had expected him to act. And because he did not fill up the measure of her fancy, because his life disregarded the pattern she wished to impose on it, she had been hard with him; at last, how little time ago, she had as good as struck him in the face. Life had not taught her much, it seemed. She had always held by her right to be angry. Had anger helped when anger had justification?

She stood up and looked at her dead husband. "For a long time," she thought, "we had gone our own ways, so far as the tie would let us, which chafed our lives. Now we go our own

ways severed, and it is best so. But I am glad, and I think you are glad, too, somehow, that we part in charity."

As one who had been long near to drowning clutches at safety with more convulsive grasp than safety needs, her mood drove her. She stood on the threshold of a new life; it seemed to her she must plant her feet firm upon it. She went over to her table and wrote a line:

"I was wrong. I want your help. Do not go to India without seeing me."

She thought to add a warning not to come at once, but then, "He will know," she said happily, and she signed her name, "Marion." Then she went over to the bedside, fell on her knees, and beside the body of the man with whom at last she was reconciled, she prayed for forgiveness and for blessing.



## ON SEEING "THE HOUSE OF JULIA" AT HERCULANEUM

By Ella Wheeler Wilcox

NOT great Vesuvius, in all his ire,  
Nor all the centuries, could hide your shame;  
There is the little window, where you came,  
With eyes that woke the demon of desire,  
And lips like rose leaves, fashioned out of fire;  
And from the lava leaps the molten flame  
Of your old sins. The walls cry out your name—  
Your face seems rising from the funeral pyre.

There must have dwelt, within your fated town,  
Full many a virtuous dame, and noble wife  
Before whose bloom yours was as star to sun;  
How strange the centuries have handed down  
Your name, fair Julia, of immoral life,  
And left the others to oblivion.

# THE WANDERER

By Katharine Metcalf Roof

**SCENE I**—*The deck of a steamer seen against the background of a heaving, leaden sea. A double row of steamer chairs extends in perspective along the deck. Each occupant reclines with closed eyes, apparently asleep. THE WANDERER appears in the doorway and stands looking about.*

How they sleep, one and all! Three hundred souls and all asleep and how pale they are, the three hundred! Half of them are women and not one is beautiful. Women should be beautiful. . . . To look at them one would say that beauty was dead forever in the world. Their heads are wound about with veils, yet one can see that they are not beautiful. They are pale—as though they looked death in the face—and still. . . . Something must be wrong. It is not natural that one should be pale and still like that—all day.

*He seats himself, draws his rug about him and stares down the line of recumbent figures.*

And not one is beautiful.

*His eyes fall at length upon the woman at his side. He starts.*

Ah, her golden hair . . . one should not despair so easily. But it is always so. One looks beyond and does not see the beauty that lies close at hand. I cannot see her face, yet a woman with such hair must be beautiful.

*The golden-haired woman stirs faintly and speaks almost inaudibly. The man on her other side rouses and turns toward her.*

THE MAN

Did you speak, Genevieve? Your voice comes to me dimly as through a dream.

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GENEVIEVE (*faintly*)

A lemon.

THE WANDERER

One would say that her voice came from another world! Something is not well with her. Oh, I am sure something is not right. It is not natural that she should be so weak with all that live gold hair. She is too fair. . . . Someone has harmed her.

*The other man rises unsteadily to his feet and stands swaying, pale as death. He speaks weakly.*

Courage, sister, I will bring you the lemon.

THE WANDERER (*approaching*)

Nay, let me bring her the lemon. The weak cannot help the weak. For the moment you are weak, but I am strong. See, the strength of the sea is in my limbs and in my blood! I can walk, dance, sing, all the day. . . . I will bring her the lemon.

THE MAN (*in a low voice*)

I thank you. It is true I am not myself today. There are times when the soul's fire burns low within one.

*He sinks back in his chair in terrible exhaustion. THE WANDERER goes off and returns in a few minutes with a lemon and a knife upon a porcelain platter. He approaches GENEVIEVE.*

THE WANDERER

It is my privilege, O Golden-Haired, to bring you the lemon.

GENEVIEVE (*feebly stretching out her hand*)

I thank you.

THE WANDERER

Is it your pleasure that I cut it? That white hand of yours is listless as a weary dove.

GENEVIEVE (*almost inaudibly*)

I thank you.

*He cuts the lemon and hands her half.*

THE WANDERER

It is strange—I do not understand. She is one who should demand only sweetness of this life, yet she desires a lemon.

GENEVIEVE *turns toward him, disclosing a pale, drawn face.*

THE WANDERER (*turning aside*)

Oh, oh, oh, she is not beautiful! The gleam of her golden hair deceived me. . . . How uncertain is the path of him who seeks beauty, and yet—one hopes on without hope. (To GENEVIEVE, *handing her the rest of the lemon*) Here is the other half. (*Sets the platter gently down upon the deck and walks away with downbent head.*) Women everywhere, and not one is beautiful! One must needs look upon them with the eyes of love to find them fair. Yet how learn first to love that which is not fair! I have read much of love upon the sea. . . . I do not understand. (*He catches sight of a woman with red hair. Her head is turned so that her face is not visible. He pauses. As he stands there a piece of paper flutters from the woman's lap and blows along the deck. He captures it and brings it to her.*) Lady, this is yours, I think. (*The woman makes a gesture of dissent without turning her head.*)

THE WANDERER

Nay, it is yours. One cannot always be sure of what is one's own in this world . . . but this is surely yours, for the wind, while I stood here, caught it from your hand.

THE RED-HAIRED WOMAN (*with averted head*)

I care not.

THE WANDERER (*after studying the paper*)

But it is your passage ticket. Without it you cannot set your feet upon the land.

THE RED-HAIRED WOMAN (*rising slightly and revealing a haggard face*)

If that be true, then give it to me quickly. God knows I would not

linger longer than I must on this accursed sea.

*He hands her the paper and passes on.*

THE WANDERER

For all her wondrous hair she is not beautiful. One would say that some jealous god had captured all the beauty in this world and made it prisoner.

*He walks on sadly, accommodating his gait to the swing of the ship. At the bow he pauses and leans against the railing staring at the water. A crimson scarf fluttering in the wind catches his eye. He discovers that it is worn by a woman standing far forward on the deck below. He hesitates a moment, then descends the steps and walks toward her.*

How it burns like a banner against the sky, the crimson scarf! Red—blood red, the color of life! Surely she who chose it must be beautiful. She stands against the wind. One would say that she loved it! Her hair is black like the night. It is the beauty of night that has most mystery, and we learn to love most easily where we cannot see clearly. Yet after we love we cannot see at all, for love makes all blind.

*He approaches the woman with the red veil. As he comes up beside her she turns toward him. He starts back in horror.*

Oh, oh, oh! her eyes. . . . How strange, how terrible! I have never seen such eyes. Surely there is something evil about her! Oh, oh, I am afraid. . . . At last I see—they are circles of dark glass that hide her eyes. They are not her eyes. She wears them that she may hide her eyes from the sun. A woman's eyes are the windows of her soul. . . . Why should she wish to hide her soul from the sun? If it were all well with her she would not wish to hide thus from the sun. She has some secret or she would not wish to hide behind those circles of dark glass. I will not look upon her.

*He turns and walks rapidly away. As he mounts the gangway the call of a trumpet floats out over the water. His face lightens.*

At last, the call to meat! It is well that three times between the rising and setting of the sun we should be recalled to the things that are real.

*He disappears into the lighted cabin. Darkness gathers slowly over the face of the waters.*

SCENE II—*Several days later. Land is in sight and the sea is calm. THE WANDERER stands upon the deck watching the moving throng. Women clad in rich garments are passing to and fro upon the deck.*

THE WANDERER

Am I awake or do the mists of sleep still cling about me? For seven days I have lived in a world where there was nothing fair to look upon save the wide sky and the deep sea, and now I wake to see women beautiful as in a dream. One would say that each is fairer than the other. Where have they been, from whence have they come?

*A golden-haired woman passes him. He stands still staring after her.*

Oh, her hair, her wonderful hair! When she is gone it is as if the sun had passed under a cloud. How sad a thing it is to find beauty only when we must lose it! I cannot lose her. I must speak!

*He walks quickly after the golden-haired woman and overtakes her.*

THE WANDERER

In what dim regions have you dwelt, O bright-haired one, that I have not seen you? It is not right that a thing so fair should be hidden from men's eyes.

THE GOLDEN-HAIRED *(with a brief glance)*

I do not understand you. . . . I have been here all the time.

THE WANDERER *(gazing at her in wonder)*

It is not possible that one should live with beauty seven days before his eyes and not see it. . . . No, no, no! One is not so blind as that.

A MAN *(approaching the golden-haired woman)*

Do you wish to keep those lemons,

Genevieve? The steward has just asked me.

GENEVIEVE *(shaking her head)*

No, you may cast them into the sea. I no longer need them.

THE WANDERER

Genevieve! Where have I heard that name . . . and the lemons? . . .

*(Stands staring at her golden hair.)* Ah, I remember! How strange that beauty should vanish and return! It is as if one were to rise from the dead. It is not right. Beauty should be fixed, unalterable. One could not tell what would happen. At any moment it might vanish. It is better that I should not love her.

*He walks sadly away. A little further along the deck he passes a woman wearing a red veil. He pauses.*

The color of life. . . . I cannot pass it by; it beckons to me. *(The woman turns and glances at him.)* Oh, her shadowy eyes! It is as if one were to see the wonder of the night in the full noonday. I must speak to her. Am I too bold to ask from whence you came? Seven long days have I paced these decks with no fair thing to look upon. But you are strangely fair. There are men for whom a cloud is ever blown across the moon. I am one of them.

THE RED-VEILED LADY *(coldly)*

I, too, have paced these decks, and although you saw me not, I have seen you.

THE WANDERER *(despairingly)*

I am indeed blind! Or rather, I am as one who sees that which passes far beyond his range, yet misses the beauty that lies near. That was the reason; you were too near.

VEILED LADY *(haughtily)*

Sir!

THE WANDERER

And not near enough.

VEILED LADY *(withdrawing)*

You speak strangely.

THE WANDERER

No, I have not seen those eyes. There are some things about which one cannot be mistaken. There are some things which we behold but once in a lifetime. I have not seen those eyes.



They are like a dark pool in the forest. One could not see them and not know.

VEILED LADY

It is true that you may not have seen my eyes, for I have worn dark glass before them. . . . The light was too strong. One can only bear so much light. . . . But he is blind indeed who cannot see through glass. I saw you quite plainly.

THE WANDERER (*starting*)

Now I understand—the glass—the dark and terrible glass! Why did you desire to hide your soul from the eyes of man? . . . I fear you.

VEILED LADY

The dark glass could not hide my soul. It was because your eyes sought only the beauty of the surface that you discovered not the beauty of my soul.

*She walks past him and is lost in the crowd. He stands speechless, staring after her for a moment; then he covers his face with his hand.*

THE WANDERER

It is true then . . . my soul is blind. Oh, oh, oh, how terrible—that one's soul should be blind! It is a little thing that one's mortal eyes should not see, but that one's soul should be blind is eternal darkness.

A WOMAN'S VOICE

I beg pardon—

THE WANDERER *rouses from his despairing attitude and looks up. He sees a beautiful woman with red hair dressed in golden brown standing before him, smiling. She holds out her hand to him.*

THE RED-HAIRED WOMAN

It was you, I think, who did me once a great kindness. I could not thank you then, for when the body is weak the light of the soul burns dimly, but I thank you now.

THE WANDERER (*taking her hand in bewilderment*)

It is sweet to believe that I have done you a service, however small. Yet it is not right that I should take the tribute that is not due me. I have done nothing for you, gladly as I would do all.

LADY (*puzzled*)

Surely it was you who saved my

steamer ticket from the sea that day I had it out to give to the purser?

THE WANDERER (*uncertainly*)

I remember dimly, as one recalls the toys of childhood—but that woman was not young and fair like you. Her face was wan and drawn with age and illness.

THE WOMAN (*freezingly*)

It was I—none other. I thank you for your service. (*Sweeps haughtily past him.*)

THE WANDERER (*gazing after her*)

Lost again, even as I would have grasped it in my hand! . . . Lost, all three—and all were beautiful. I could have loved them all. The seven days—lost also—would have given time for each, for the heart of man is like a flower made of many cells. . . . But I am blind—blind in the soul, blind as the eyeless creatures of the deep sea which I have crossed. It is terrible to have a blind soul, for then one wakes as from a long gray dream to find himself in a world of color that dissolves before his eyes. Such things happen only when the soul is blind, for the eyes of the soul can perceive the beauty that is hidden from the eyes of flesh. (*He falls into a despairing reverie.*)

CHORUS OF SAILORS

Land—land! We toss and roll no more!

THE WANDERER (*starting up*)

I will not believe it yet. . . . Perhaps it is not my soul that is blind. . . . Perhaps it is their souls that are not beautiful and cannot bear the great white light of mid-ocean, and that is why their faces were not fair. It is difficult to be sure whether one sees or does not see; but perhaps it is not well to believe that one is blind. In this strange new land I will search still further for that beauty of the soul which is written in the face.

THE WANDERER *stands with a new light of hope in his eyes looking toward the land. The boat slowly approaches the shore.*

# THE WIND-POOL

By B. J. Daskam

WORTHING climbed the stone wall and walked slowly down the road toward the little lane which led to Jimmy Masterson's shack. He was still panting from his run down the hill-slope, and the blood pounded through his veins with a tingling exultation from the sweeping surge of the wind on the summit. The reaction left him with a happy sense of weariness and he dropped lazily to the turf at the turning, vaguely wondering, as he filled his pipe, how the boys at the shack could sleep through the morning—for he was certain to find them still sleeping—when the March wind was running clean and sweet across the hills.

He was puffing contentedly when he became aware of a woman strolling slowly toward him along the dusty road, leading a little figure in blue overalls.

As she drew nearer he was surprised to discover that he recognized her—the wife of a friend of Jimmy Masterson. He had met her once or twice during the previous Summer, and he had a vague recollection of something about a little cottage in the country, where the young couple—Wentward, yes, that was the name—spent five or six months out of the year.

He rose indolently as she came up to him.

"Probably you won't remember me, Mrs. Wentward," he began easily, "but I had the pleasure——"

"Yes, indeed, Mr. Worthing," she smiled at him, "I remember. But I hardly expected to meet you here. You are stopping in the country?"

Worthing was conscious of a mild

surprise that she had remembered him; he had hardly exchanged a dozen words with her, and it had been with an effort that he had recalled her name.

The child retired behind her skirts and endeavored with partial success to force a gaily colored ball into his mouth.

"Ought he—I hope I'm right; one can never be sure when they all wear blue overalls—ought he to do that?" Worthing inquired anxiously.

"Oh, son!" she cried reproachfully. "You mustn't! Give mother the ball!"

She bent hastily over him and bore the rubber away.

"He will try to eat it," she explained brightly, "and the paint isn't at all good for him. Say 'Good morning' to Mr. Worthing, son."

But the boy withdrew to the seclusion of the skirts and sulked.

"Isn't it a glorious morning?" she asked. "Son and I have been for a long, long walk down the road."

"Glorious!" assented Worthing. "On the hill the wind is almost like a salt-water breeze. I'm afraid I shouted and sang in a disgraceful manner—it's fairly intoxicating! You can almost see the wind rushing up the hill-slope!"

She threw one arm about the boy's neck.

"Oh, the hill!" she said wistfully. "I love it so, but Willard—Mr. Wentward won't let me go up there unless he's with me, and that means once or twice a month. For he's always busy building walls and things on Saturday afternoons and Sundays."

"Of course one *might* be blown away," suggested Worthing lightly.

She looked up at him.

"It isn't that," she explained gravely, "but there are so many Italians about, you know, and he thinks that it isn't safe. I'm not afraid. But you didn't tell me where you are staying?"

"I'm on my way to Jimmy Master-son's shack," he said, "just down the lane. You must know Jimmy—why, yes, he gave me the pleasure of meeting you."

She drew the boy from behind her skirts and bribed him to silence with the ball.

"Oh, yes," she said indifferently, "I know Mr. Masterson. You are staying with them?"

Worthing was amused by her tone.

"No," he said, "I'm with my brother at Rutley, for a month or so, but I spend a good part of my time with Jimmy—I rather like shack life, after one recovers from that artificial desire to wash occasionally."

She did not join in his smile.

"Come, son," she said. "We must go home and get some breaky. We're only a little way down the road, Mr. Worthing. Look in some time when you feel an overpowering desire for soap—we have every facility."

"You're very kind," Worthing laughed. "I'll hold you to your word. It's been a pleasure to have seen you again."

She nodded brightly to him and rolled the ball down the road, while the boy broke into gleeful, staggering chase.

Worthing's amusement at her assumption of superiority was tinged with a mild irritation, but, he considered leniently, she was very young.

"It's a fortunate thing, young lady," he laughed to himself as he sauntered down the lane, "that you have that two-year-old to call you 'mother,' or you would have difficulty in impressing anyone with your matronly dignity. I wonder if the boys have been singing in parts or shooting the necks off bottles in the wee small hours, that you 'them' them in that high and mighty manner? Anyway, you have very pretty blue

eyes—or were they gray—or green? Hanged if I remember!"

But a glad shout hailed him from the shack, and he was buried in a wriggling, joyous avalanche of dogs.

"Hi, Worthing!" called someone. "Come in and help me pull these scoundrels out of bed! Half-past eleven—it's shockin'!"

Worthing dismissed Mrs. Wentward from his thoughts and went into the shack.

It was two days later when he started back across the hills.

In the valley the morning breeze whirled joyfully, in little eddies, and Worthing quickened his pace, eager for the sturdy gale which awaited him on the hilltop. Leaping the little brook at the edge of the meadow he began the long, winding ascent of the trail among the evergreen scrub.

As he left the path where it curved around the foot of the hill, and swung up the steep, open slope, the force of the wind caught him for the first time, full and strong upon his back.

Worthing turned and faced it, inhaling great gasping breaths with open mouth; leaning forward with his whole weight supported by the steady, sweeping current of air.

Then he turned again and strode up the slope, shouting half-inarticulate snatches of song, as his blood tingled from the pressure on his lungs as if his veins were running with new, sweet wine.

Everything in the shack and even in the world was a thing apart, forgotten, and he was alone in a new, clean-swept world of wind, which was torn down and created afresh for him with each successive gust.

He staggered to the first rise and there, steadying herself by the old flag-staff he saw Mrs. Wentward, her flushed face turned full into the wind-waves.

"I knew it must be you!" she shouted down to him. "Isn't it wonderful!"

She was leaning lightly forward to preserve her balance, her skirts flutter-

ing behind her, outlining her slim young figure against the hill-crest, and to Worthing's startled vision she seemed poised for flight, like some supple creature of the air.

"Stolen fruit?" he called, as the wind bore him toward her.

She smiled down at him.

"I'm afraid so," she said joyously. "I couldn't resist it."

He caught at the pole and together they swayed to the curling wind currents. The gale was freshening and it roared in their ears like the crashing of sea breakers against the rocks.

Worthing leaned toward her. "Shall we try for the top?" he shouted.

"I did not dare, alone," she called back.

He locked her arm in his and they swung away from the protection of the pole, and out into the full fury of the wind. Instinctively they leaned back and away from each other, striding in great aerial flights as the current forced them up the crest.

"Bear to the left!" shouted Worthing. "We must catch the flagstaff or we will be blown over the top!"

She nodded and they threw their weight diagonally against the storm, fighting for the second pole at the apex of the meadow hill.

As they mounted the crest Worthing caught the staff with his free hand and drew them both back into the very heart of the wind.

The valley stretched itself out before them, dotted with farm-houses; beyond, the encircling hills arose, range after range, in the distance. At their base the sun struck a glint from the river, where it curved into sight from their viewpoint.

But over all there seemed to settle a strange, dim haze of wind, as if the gale had body, was something visible, tangible.

It swept up to them, no longer in waves, but in a mighty, sustained current, as water gathers head in a mill-race, humming a single harsh, resonant note in their throbbing ears.

Worthing glanced toward her, as she poised, undulating, on the summit,

drinking in the gale with parted lips. Suddenly there came over him a vague, disturbing sense of something he had forgotten, something for which his bewildered mind groped desperately within the haze of his memory.

She released her grasp from the pole, clutching at her flying skirts. As the storm snatched her, bearing her light body toward the steep incline, Worthing swung himself recklessly clear of the staff and caught her in his arms, fighting with all his weight to regain their hold.

With a gasping sense of relief, he felt the wood at his back, supporting them from the driving blast.

Then, as her frightened eyes met his, he forgot everything in the wonder of their depth.

"Why," he muttered confusedly, "your eyes are the color of the wind! Just like the wind!"

She lay lightly in his arms and the roaring of the wind in their ears merged into the clamor of distant shouting.

"What is that?" she murmured brokenly. "Do you hear it?"

They strained their ears through the wind-roar, and gradually the shouting swelled into harsh, articulate cries, ringing against the hill-crest, mingled with the splintering crash of steel on steel.

She shrank closer in his embrace and dropped her head.

"I am afraid!" she whispered vaguely, "I am afraid!"

Worthing stared dumbly across the valley.

From where the hills had sloped sharply to the river the sun glinted on a broad expanse of sea, stretching out into the dim distance until the eye could follow no further. From the cliffs on the shore to the open slope of their hill was visible no gleam of white houses, no moist brown of tilled fields—nothing but black, shadowy forests.

Below them, on the hill-slope, a wild mass of men rushed together and parted again, in seething, formless groups.

Worthing strained toward them with

parted lips; somewhere within the recesses of his mind a film was slowly, haltingly unrolling, with a blurred sense of remembrance.

The shouting took the rough semblance of song, wordless and rhythmic, bearing with it the hot joy of battle.

One huge, fair-haired warrior thrust himself from the mass and sprang lightly to a rock, his mantle of skins flaring behind him in the wind. Joyously, his deep-voiced chant rose above the clamor, and at the end of each rough verse the hillside rang with the pounding clash of arms, as the wild horde beat out a mighty refrain with sword on shield.

Unconsciously Worthing's arms beat with them, his sword crashed harshly against his hide-bound shield, thrilling him with some hot, long-forgotten delight.

Then, at the edge of the forest, his eye caught the gleam of steel and a single, compact body of men came slowly, steadily toward the hill-slope. Shield locked with shield, their steady advance was like the rising of the tide; above their heads a golden eagle hovered, presaging triumph.

A breathless silence fell upon the horde on the hillside, and as Worthing stared into the rippling mass of fierce, upturned faces, a wave of exultant pride uplifted him, for those huge-limbed, eager men were waiting for him—were waiting for his word to unloose their savage strength upon the little cohort before them.

With a sudden harsh shout he threw up his sword-arm, and the wild hosts poured down the slope in broken, straggling masses.

For a moment the cohort stood against the shock of their charge, but as the axes rose and fell, the golden eagle wavered and a roaring crash of shields announced that the battle was over.

Worthing laughed fiercely, tossing his sword high in the air to the answering clamor from the scattered host below.

But he felt a hand on his arm and,

for the first time, he turned to his companion on the hilltop.

Her unbound hair floated loosely in the wind, and her bare arm, heavy with rough beaten gold, thrust itself from her mantle, pointing stiffly, warningly toward the forest. But her eyes were unchanged—luminous, wind-colored.

As he stared at her, a sudden sharp sense of utter hopelessness seized him, and together they strained their eyes toward the masking trees, whence something was coming—some vague, overwhelming danger.

Then, from the dark forest burst a mighty force of steel-clad men, cohort after cohort, legion after legion, while the scattered hordes on the plain broke into startled shouting, vainly struggling to regain their position on the hillside.

The crash of contact swelled into the roar of battle as the legions fell upon the straggling masses, and the golden eagles surged steadily, evenly up the slope. Weaker and weaker came the wild war-songs and suddenly the remnant of the horde broke and fled along the hillside to right and left, striving to outflank the cohorts and gain the shelter of the forest.

But from the centre of the advancing force a bugle rang, and on either wing great bodies of horse charged across the plain, sweeping in the fugitives.

Here and there a few desperate axes still flashed in the sun, but the great savage horde which had swept down upon the decoying cohort was crushed into nothing.

Worthing turned again to his companion. Already the eager helmets were showing above the first rise; behind, the cliffs sheered down without a foothold.

Angry despair, and a confused sense of some great loss yet to come, held him as he threw his shield arm about her.

But still those sad eyes urged him to some action and he strove desperately to fathom their pleading. . . .

Suddenly, in a wave of agony, the memory of how his sword had bitten

into her white flesh just where the mantle exposed her neck, rushed over him, and his heart was frozen with the dumb horror of a dreamer unable to wake.

He caught her fiercely in his arms and as his lips burned against hers the harsh shouting of the enemy in their throbbing ears swelled into the singing of the centuries, hurtling through the wind.

Worthing released her and leaned dizzily against the flagstaff, striving wearily to formulate some coherent thought from the chaos of his brain.

The wind had slackened to a mild breeze and the sun shone placidly over the little valley with its calm fields and scattered houses.

She was staring up at him, her eyes dazed and piteous like the eyes of a dumb brute in pain.

Suddenly, without a word, they turned and dashed recklessly down the hillside, in mad, unreasoning flight from something which had already overtaken them.

At the road they stopped as if at a preconceived signal.

"Did you—did you—?" Worthing muttered dully, but his voice trailed off into nothing.

She was leaning weakly against the wall, murmuring over and over again, as a child cons an unintelligible lesson:

"I must never see you again—never see you again."

Worthing made an effort to form some well-known words into a sentence.

"I will go away," he said thickly. "I will go away—abroad."

She did not heed him, but only muttered her sentence, parrot-like, uncomprehendingly.

Suddenly, with a little inarticulate cry, she turned and sped stumbling down the road.

Worthing watched her, dispassionately, and then walked wearily toward the shack. He was conscious that the sun was still high in the heavens, but was unable to connect that fact with the wonder it caused him.

"Back so soon?" called someone. "Thought you were off for a long hike."

The commonplace fell soothingly on Worthing's strained nerves and he sank gratefully into a rough chair.

"Wasn't that Mrs. Wentward with you?" asked Masterson. "Lord! It's surprising that she'd even speak to you! I used to know her pretty well, but ever since Wentward brought her down to the shack one day she freezes me on sight. She's not your kind at all—absolutely conventional and all that, you know. But perhaps she knows that you're not a regular 'shacker'—only a transient."

Worthing laughed discordantly, shaking with hysterical mirth.

"You'd better give me a drink," he said, "I—I had a little fall on the hill."

"Serves you right," chided Masterson, as he poured the whisky, "for trying to go home. See here, Worthing, why don't you pack a bag and bunk over here for a week or so—all Summer if you like it. We need a fourth for bridge."

Worthing considered heavily.

"I'd like it well enough," he muttered, "only, you see, I'm going away—abroad."

But there rushed over his dazed senses a sudden clear consciousness that the winds are established unto the four corners of the earth and no man may find his way beyond their reach.



# THE PAINTING OF A PORTRAIT

By Eleanor Vicocq

ROGER BALDWIN sat a little apart in a lounge-chair, shy and uncomfortable, and longing for his accustomed solitude.

His hostess found time to give him a little reproachful look as she crossed the grass, with a cluster of guests about her. He returned the look with a humorous appeal in his eyes.

"I told you I shouldn't make myself pleasant," they said, "I can't help it—you made me come."

It was true that his presence was entirely owing to Lady Malmartyn. Meeting him at the Academy *soirée*, she had been struck by his fagged appearance, and bidden him to Gorse-mere.

Roger hated house-parties, or indeed anything that forced him to leave his quiet Chelsea rooms and the gaunt studio adjoining.

The *soirée* was professional, and therefore unavoidable; but a week in a country house—"I really must beg you to let me off, Maud," he pleaded.

"Nonsense," said Lady Malmartyn. "You are my cousin, Roger, and people will say I neglect my relatives. I shall expect you on the seventh. You needn't talk to anyone. Just play golf, and drink milk, and I'll let you go back when you look a little less like a well-bred scarecrow."

Then she was lost in the crowd, and Roger knew his fate was sealed. And here he was in the midst of the usual mixture of flanneled men and muslined girls, chattering with the inconsequence of youth over their tea. Some people had recognized the portrait-painter over whose work a little wrangling among the critics had got into the

papers, and spoke to him out of curiosity.

Roger meekly allowed himself to be introduced, and talked about the heat with a blankness that soon left him unmolested.

To sit silent and play the rôle of an uninteresting onlooker was easy enough, but still not what he fancied.

Presently everyone went down to the tennis lawns, except his hostess and a young man who seemed to have come very late.

"Roger!" called Lady Malmartyn, "please come and help me to talk to Mr. Lyston."

Roger came to her obediently, was introduced, and took another vacant chair under the great chestnut-tree. His quick artist's eye took in the young fellow's long limbs and pleasing face, with its youthful eagerness.

"Baldwin!" cried the lad, catching at the name. "What luck! I've wanted to meet you for ages."

"Really?" said Roger, wondering.

"Yes; you paint portraits, don't you?"

"Sometimes," admitted Roger, rather amused.

"And when you do it is a portrait," said the boy with fervor, as he received his cup.

Roger liked this simple tribute to his powers, and smiled across at his cousin.

"That's where Roger makes his mistake," she said, with her pretty air of command. "People don't want their souls hanging up in their drawing-rooms, or displayed to the public view during May and June."

"But a portrait is made to last,"



protested the boy. "You want something from which your descendants can see what you were really like."

"And where would your respect for your ancestors be then?" demanded Lady Malmartyn.

"Well, it's just as bad to brag about your ancestors as it is to run them down; and Mr. Baldwin's portraits put you off doing either," said the boy, with great conviction.

"I don't know why I'm letting you encourage Roger's natural conceit like this," said her ladyship. "What is it, Charles?" she added, to a footman with a salver, coming across the lawn. It was a telegram which required an answer.

"I must leave you to look after each other," she said, rising. "Take Mr. Lyston down to the courts when he's finished his tea, Roger." And she trailed off toward the long façade of the house.

"You're fond of pictures?" suggested Roger, leaning back in his lounge-chair, and watching his companion with half-closed eyes, from under the drooping brim of his panama.

"Oh, yes; but it isn't exactly that." The boy played with his spoon nervously. "I suppose you never do any work in the country?" he asked.

"A little sketching sometimes," replied Roger, wondering if it was his own portrait the young man wanted. He rather hoped so, and felt he could get a good deal of pleasure out of the thin bronzed face and slim muscular figure, in its well-fitting gray flannels.

"You couldn't undertake a portrait now?" asked the boy, seeming to come to the point.

"Well, I'm supposed to be taking a rest cure; it really depends on what sort of thing you mean, though," said Roger.

"It's a—a friend—a lady; not of my own family, you know." The boy hesitated.

"Do you think she wants a full-length?" inquired Roger, inwardly amused, watching the change coming over the expressive face.

"I don't really know; it's my idea—she just said she wouldn't mind——"

Roger suddenly understood. The boy was red through his tan and obviously embarrassed.

"Perhaps you had better ask her," said Roger.

"I suppose you see how it is. I—we've been engaged only a month. What I want is a portrait of her, just as she is. It's for myself, you know, and of course I'd settle the business part of it."

"Certainly, but how am I to get sittings?"

The boy's embarrassment suddenly slipped from him. He put down his cup, his face radiant and less youthful, with a subtle change which Roger watched curiously.

"She's coming tonight. She's going to stay here. When you see her you'll understand. I don't believe you can help yourself—I couldn't; if I could do things like you, I should never cease painting her——"

He broke off breathlessly.

"What if I made a mess of it?" said Roger. "If I should spoil her—wouldn't a bad portrait haunt you? I can't vouch for myself implicitly, you know. My work is, in a great measure, ruled by chance like everything else."

"No," said the boy, his eagerness come back. "You are the only man to do it. I knew that when I saw that portrait of Miss Cooper in last year's Academy. A man who could do that is *the* man. If you will, I shall be awfully grateful." Between his shyness and enthusiasm he was almost incoherent.

"The gratitude is mine for the honor. Of course I will do it if you are so good as to trust me," said Roger, smiling.

"Thanks—thanks—well, more than I can say. It's such luck. I've been wondering how I could get to see you—and here I've met you just in the right place."

The sight of Lady Malmartyn coming out of the house roused Roger to a sense of his neglected duties.

"Hullo! I believe you've finished

your tea," he said guiltily. "We had better get down to the courts before my cousin catches us."

Afterward, it seemed to Roger that time flew, and that scarcely an hour later he entered the drawing-room before dinner, to find Lady Malmartyn talking to young Lyston and a new arrival. He paused, a little disconcerted and wondering if he could retreat before he was noticed.

"Roger!" cried his cousin, catching sight of him.

"Mr. Baldwin!" said Lyston, at the same moment.

"Come and be introduced to the lady you're going to paint," commanded Lady Malmartyn.

Roger looked at the girl for the first time, wondering what the boy's ideal was going to be like.

He was not given to being dramatic, and his slight bow had no appearance of anything but the calmest manner possible, yet he could not meet the sudden return of all the old pain without a jar that set his nerves throbbing.

Lady Malmartyn made a totally unnecessary introduction.

"It's ridiculous," he thought, "meeting one's long-lost love as someone else's fiancée! Exactly like a penny dreadful! I wonder what my cue is?"

"I think we have met before," she said, with the laugh he still sometimes heard in his dreams.

"I think so," he agreed, laughing himself at the absurdity of the words.

"How charming!" said her ladyship laughing, too, for no particular reason. "Isn't it, Mr. Lyston?"

"Ripping—fancy, though, how small the world is!" exclaimed the boy, all pleased astonishment, and as though he had made a new and brilliant observation.

"Can I paint her?" thought Roger, as the evening went on. "Can I? When I know every line and curve by heart!"

Later, when he went to his room, he spent some moments removing a pen-and-ink drawing of a girl's head from the back of his watch. He was about to lock it in his dressing-case,

but a sudden determination made him light a candle and burn it in the flame.

The portrait was painted. And at the same time a comedy for two was played.

Roger surpassed himself as a slight acquaintance. They treated each other with a casual interest that a more penetrating person than the simple boy could scarcely have distrusted. Even when alone they clung with a sort of desperation to their rôles.

Roger worked steadily; every time he glanced from his canvas to his model he met her eyes, and she looked with utter impassiveness into his.

The boy came every day to watch, fascinated by the swift movements of the big brushes; and sat contentedly where he could see both sitter and portrait, smoking in silence.

Roger followed his usual system of covering his canvas first with the whole color scheme; depending on a day's rapid work to bring the face to perfection, and avoiding any retrenching as much as possible.

He seemed in this way to grasp a certain luminosity and vitality peculiar to himself—a reaching to the very soul of things, the sense of which had touched Lyston when looking at his previous paintings.

One morning they were alone during the whole sitting.

The boy had been carried off to a tennis tournament, and Roger, realizing that he must commence the head, looked up and told her so in his politely conversational tone.

"Really—at last?" she said, with a quick smile.

But Roger had seen something on the raising of his eyes which nearly robbed him of his hard-won self-control. It had been hard enough to watch her as she sat there with all the graceful lines and delicate tints making the picture that was always in his memory. Now in the language of her eyes he seemed to read again an appeal, swift, vanishing, but compelling. Three years ago because of that glance he had said the words that had filled his heart for so long.

But the look had faded. No, she did not want him. And Roger had gone away and made his living, without much caring whether he lived or not. He stood staring at his canvas. They had forgotten their parts at last, and in the silence felt their acquired indifference slipping from them.

"It has been rather a strain, hasn't it?" she said at length, in a slightly breathless voice.

"I thought it made no difference to you," said Roger, catching up his brushes and working heedlessly.

"Oh, never mind that! You see, it's Guy—he mustn't guess the slightest—"

"Of course not. But I should have thought—a mere man whom you happened to have refused three years ago—it would hardly matter."

"No—I— What's the use of saying anything about it? But—*don't* let him infer things."

"Of course not," repeated Roger.

"If I thought that you really—that this might be painful to you—" she said a few moments later, looking away from him.

"As you say, there's no use talking about it," said Roger grimly.

He painted away without seeming to think of anything but the mixing of tones and the deft placing of touches.

A clock somewhere struck twelve.

"Ah," she cried, springing up, "the hour is over. Let me go."

"It's hardly a question of 'letting.' You can come and go as you please; I haven't any right to prevent you," he said, without looking up.

She pulled a gauze scarf from among the cushions around her, and draped it quickly over her bare shoulders. Roger manipulated a fold and did not look at her as she crossed the room.

At the door she paused, and said, with a curious effect of speaking against her will:

"You never make allowances, do you?"

"I don't quite see your meaning," said Roger, wishing she would go.

"From your very high standpoint of male integrity it does not occur to you

to make allowances for the inconsistencies of the feminine nature? It never struck you that girls—sometimes—haven't any very lasting reasons for their actions?"

"Perhaps I realize that now," said Roger. "I was too much of a boy before—boys are apt to believe what is shown them. How could I tell——?"

"Hush!" she said. "We must let that alone—now."

As she opened the door, sounds of talking and stray laughter came from the hall.

"There is Guy—I must go to him," she said.

Then she was gone, and Roger worked on careless that he hardly saw what he painted, mechanically putting touch after touch without noticing the gradual effect of progress.

The next morning he got up before he was called, tired of his sleepless solitude. He made his way through the silent house to the anteroom with a north light which he had adopted as a studio.

The big canvas was standing with its painted side to the wall amid a litter of paint-rags, brushes, and such-like. Roger pulled it round and carried it to the easel. He stood back to make his usual critical inspection.

There she sat, leaning forward in her chair, the soft black folds falling gracefully away from her white neck; one slim arm and hand drooping among the cushions; the other pulling a red rose from the cluster against her shoulder; her face lifted and looking into his. And on the face, though still unfinished, was the look he had seen on it three years ago—and once again yesterday.

The first impulse was of elation. His artist's instinct told him it was a matchless piece of painting; he could not help wondering how he had done it when his thoughts were anything but concentrated on his work.

But of course it must go, he could not leave that unmistakable craving in the wistful eyes, the tremulous lips that seemed to quiver as he watched them.

He turned, took up a brush, and

hastily found the flesh tones on his palette. As he stepped forward to touch away the expression from the eyes the door opened and Guy Lyston entered.

The boy was across the room in a couple of long strides, and pulling Roger back with the force of his athletic young muscles.

"No, you don't," he said, laughing at Roger's discomfiture. "Not another dab do you put on till I've seen it. I didn't get a chance yesterday, you know. I've come early on purpose. Here, get out of the way."

Roger was flattened unceremoniously against the wall, where he stood hurling mental imprecations on himself for his foolishness in not having immediately effaced the expression from the portrait's face. Alas! there was none of the slight stupidity of the average youth about Guy.

The boy stood with his hands on the back of a chair, looking up at the painted face in silence.

He had been riding, and his breeches and gaiters showed the good lines of his figure, the crisp morning air had brought the fresh color into his face. Roger watched a line appear between his eyebrows—a shadow come across the cheerful gray eyes.

"I don't quite understand where you got that look," he said at last.

"That's why I didn't want you to see," said Roger. "It's gone wrong somehow. I was altering it when you came in."

The boy still gazed, his troubled perplexity deepening.

"Yes, I can't say I like it—it's queer. I don't think I ever saw her look that way."

"Oh, it was a fluke," said Roger.

"It reminds me of something. By Jove! I know! It's that portrait of Mrs. Robinson—'Perdita'—with the collie dog, and that chap's miniature—don't you remember?"

Roger remembered only too well, but he shook his head in response.

"It is," persisted the boy, "just the same look, as if she cared for someone, and was wanting him, don't you know?"

It's not a happy look. Really, you know, it's not appropriate."

He kept his arm raised between Roger and the devastating brushes.

"Not yet," he said quickly. "She never looked at me like that—she'd never need to. No—I've never seen it. What is it? Some way you've made it come. You're a wizard to have invented it."

"I tell you it's pure chance," said Roger nervously.

Guy turned his head and looked at his companion with puzzled eyes. Roger avoided his look, and fidgeted with his palette.

Guy's gaze went back to the portrait. He seemed to be going over something in his brain. Quite suddenly the ruddy color left his face, and he said in a curious voice:

"Once when you were talking to me about your methods didn't you say that your work was always the realization of your impression?"

"Generally, but I've no fixed rules," said Roger, recognizing his own words despairingly.

Guy took his hands from the chair-back and pulled off his riding-gloves very slowly and methodically.

"She looked like that yesterday?" he asked.

"Of course not," said Roger instantly.

The boy gave him a swift, searching look. His compelling clear gray eyes were hard to evade.

"I suppose I see only a youngster to you," he said, "but still I know that girls don't look like that—often. She could only look at one man that way, because she's not the sort that makes such looks cheap."

"My dear fellow, I shall have to turn you out. Excuse me, but I must get to work."

"You're trying to hide something," said Guy, with sudden conviction. "I wouldn't bother, only, you see, she never looked at *me* like that. Good heavens! do you—? . . . I've no business to say it, but it can't be—there is someone—else?"

Roger said "Rubbish!" resolutely.

"Do you mind saying there isn't?" The boy's voice sounded sharp with anxiety.

"What absurd ideas you do get—" began Roger.

Guy stretched out a long arm and caught him by the shoulder.

"Are you trying to fool me?" he demanded, almost fiercely.

His quick wits were at work, and he detected the momentary hesitation before Roger said:

"Nothing of the sort, of course."

He let go and drew in his breath with a sort of gasp.

"Good Lord!—this is what it means, then."

Roger seemed suddenly at the end of his resources. Silently, he watched something coming into the boy's face that spoiled its youthful contours.

"Tell me about it," demanded Guy. "I want to know."

"Three years ago she refused—a man. After he had gone I believe she found she'd made a mistake. But there was no second chapter to the romance; it was all over long ago," said Roger roughly.

"And—she still cares for him. But she let me think—and I *cared*—she must have known how I cared!"

Guy strode away to the window, and stood with his back turned, in a silence that seemed to cry out against the older man. Presently he faced him again—the impulsive boy suddenly grown older, his eagerness replaced by a new penetration.

"It's yourself—since you painted it.

You knew her before. Well, I see now—but it's not a case of the forgotten romance—it's the living thing. And *I'm* the man to go away."

"I would have told you before, and gone away, but she didn't want that—and you know one does what she wants," said Roger helplessly.

"Oh, I'm not blaming you—or—anybody else. It's just Fate, I suppose. You can make her happy—I can't. I'd rather have known it right off. But what's the use of going over it all?"

It was an admirable semblance of coolness; but his hands trembled as he picked up his gloves from the table.

Roger was silent with a sense of helplessness.

Guy went toward the portrait and paused in front of it, the new hard lines in his face softening.

He was not blaming her—only saying "Good-bye" under his breath. For a long moment he looked at the pictured eyes, and then turned to Roger, holding out his hand.

"You will tell her—I understand—and—that it's all right? I can't talk about it—but you're a good sort and I'm glad of it, for her sake."

Roger shook the proffered hand.

"About the portrait," added Guy, as he went to the door. "It's rather yours than mine—I don't think I want it—now."

Then Roger, with a sudden impulse, as the door closed, caught up his palette knife and with two swift strokes blotted out the beautiful face.



## THE HAPPY FAMILY

**M**R. SCRAPPINGTON (*preceding his spouse down the steps of their residence*)  
—Hurry up! We'll miss our car!

MRS. SCRAPPINGTON—Wait till I get my gloves on.

MR. SCRAPPINGTON (*sourly*)—Why don't you dress in the house? I'd as soon see a woman put on her stockings in the street as her gloves.

MRS. SCRAPPINGTON (*sweetly*)—I presume so! Most men would.

# THE POWER BEHIND HIS WILL

By Anne Warner

"IT is like this," said Bardi, picking up the little ball of clay that he always took into his hands when he began to address the students, "it is like this," clearing his throat in the way that was also one of his habits, "you must study so much else and study it well, if you wish to attain anything even approximating excellence in sculpture. Modeling is mere playing with dough—as I play now"—for he had placed the clay upon the stand before him and was fashioning it deftly as he spoke—"marble is but a thing to be chipped instead of a thing to be pressed—but if you would be great—or even small—in true art you must model and chip your own spirit first of all, and to do that you must study, study, study. One's soul divines beauty"—and he turned the clay, now become a charming little Hebe head, toward them—"but no soul divines nerves and muscles; watch me!"

And then he moved himself so that he might see the Hebe and they might see him, and with quick, cruel skill his lithe fingers pressed here, gouged there, molded inward elsewhere, and the Hebe grew aged, grew haggard, grew into Death itself.

And then he drew back and looked at them.

"*Voilà, messieurs*, there she is! As Hebe I knew her as soon as I could put water on earth and build her up out of the mud, but as Death I learned her only through endless hours of nightly pains over my muscle-charts, my physiological pages, my inveterate persevering onward; through my beating downward of self, my building upward

of will, until the will in me is omnipotent over all—*over all*, do you understand!—and so omnipotent that man and marble must yield alike. Learn that, and you learn all—all that there is to learn—all that I know myself. I know each step in life, in grief, in love, in agony, because I know them spiritually and also physically, through each nerve, each cord, each drawing of the lip. That you must learn, too—or be content to copy the Milo eternally for the drawing-room market."

He stopped and cleared his throat again. One of the students, a tall young fellow with a good outline of nose and chin and a particularly promising breadth of forehead and beam of eye, was looking straight at him, with a special attention even among those all-attentive faces.

"Ah, Dietrich, you know what I mean," Bardi said, smiling.

"Yes, surely, sir—I have studied life a little and medicine much."

"So!—then that accounts for your comprehension. Here, accept *La Mort*—it is the usual reward of genius, and you should have it today." With which somewhat bitter joke he picked up the skull of clay (that had three minutes since been that lovely, girlish head) and set it upon the stand by Dietrich's work. Then he took his hat, wished them good day and departed.

In the studio behind him a silence fell until old Arlette, who kept the place, came hobbling back from where she had waited to open the outer door with a deep curtsy for the master upon his going.

"Ah, but he was handsome today!" she commented in accents of feminine adoration rendered pathetic by her broken teeth, and indistinct by the spaces where other teeth were not, "so handsome. But his cough—did you hear his cough?"

"*Diable*, Arlette, that is no cough," laughed the boy who stood nearest and therefore heard best what she said, "that is a habit."

"*Eh b'en*, that it be so! Mlle. Davoust is a happy girl always."

"When does he marry?" asked the German student, always working steadily.

"*Dieu*, that knows no man. Because he is an atheist and will not be married in a church, and mademoiselle is a saint and will not be married elsewhere."

"What is she like?" asked the German.

"Like!—she is like a flower—like an angel!"

"Rich, too——"

"A countess for an aunt——"

"Nineteen years old——"

The whole room had chimed in to help Arlette describe the perfections of Bardi's fiancée.

"There must be a great difference in their ages," said the German student.

"Twenty years."

"Thirty years——"

"Twenty-five years——"

It was babel again.

"Messieurs, you are all wrong," said Arlette, with dignity; "the master has but forty-six."

"That is too much," said the German quietly, "even if he had not that bad habit of coughing."

Something like a chill fell upon them all under the influence of his speech. No one spoke further. The magnetism of Bardi as he had left them a few minutes since was not strong enough to overthrow the force with which their new companion had voiced his opinion—and yet the brave figure with its radiating vitality was the dominant picture that they never could think of as being possibly dimmed.

Meanwhile he of whom they had

spoken was bidding Mlle. Davoust adieu, in her aunt's presence. That a countess should chaperon the love-making of a Bardi was perhaps a little condescending on the part of the countess, but then, if you knew how straitened were the means of that countess, and how Marie—totally dependent on her aunt—had absolutely refused to go into a convent! Oh, be very sure that the countess sat far away at the further end of the faded and moth-eaten—because real instead of imitation—Louis XVI *salon*, and hummed assiduously to herself while she looked out upon the dreary little garden that a huge modern block had left her out of the acre once hers in the heart of Paris.

"Shall you be absent long?" Marie asked, suffering her little hand to rest in that of her suitor's, because he was very respectful and never asked more.

"Ten days, not longer. Fancy, I have not seen my father for twenty-five years! Not since that day that I left the blue sky of Italia to travel afar. I was a student in Rome first, you know, then I went to my home, kissed them all, and set out for Paris. But for the war there I should never have come here—should never have known you."

She smiled prettily at this and then asked further:

"Where does your father live?"

"By Chesières, high up in the mountains, where he can see the wideness of earth and sky. He who was born and raised on a plain suddenly took that wish unto him some fifteen years ago, and so I bid him make the change. My sister lives with him."

"Are there more of the family?"

"No, the rest are all dead; death has been busy with mine since I left home. And yet we are a strong race."

He looked at her and smiled as he said the words, even as he cleared his throat with that same little, curious cough.

Mlle. Davoust looked earnestly at him.

"And losing them all, monsieur—did not that at all turn your thoughts



toward God? Can you believe that they—your brothers and sisters—died down as the grass dies down with the Winter's birth?"

He nodded, smiling.

"Yes, Marie, I believe that; and so I shall die down in my turn, and you in yours."

The tears stood in her eyes of violet-purple, and her mouth fell into curves that should have converted any man to any belief that man has formed so far.

"I cannot bear to think it," she replied.

"But so it is."

She looked at him sorrowfully, wistfully, for a moment and then she drooped her eyes to the ground.

"Now I have saddened you?" he said, smiling.

"You always sadden me, monsieur."

"Then let me bid you good-bye for today and when I return I will try to cheer you instead." He coughed as he spoke and smiled as he coughed.

"I am going to church," she said softly, a swift spasm of indefinable pain seizing her at his words. "Won't you walk with me to the door?—my aunt goes, too."

"No, Marie," he said, shaking his head, "hardly that, but when I return we will all go to Meudon for *déjeuner* some day and worship my own bright god, the sun in all his glory, for it will be Springtime then."

She looked sorrowfully at him again and he took her two hands and kissed them in token of adieu, and in five minutes was out in the frosty damp of Paris's January and walking with his swift vigorous step toward the centre of its life. As he walked he had to pass the very church which she attended and where he knew that she planned his attendance one day. He smiled as he reflected on the utter folly of the idea, and his heavy mustache was still pleasantly twisted when he suddenly perceived Dietrich, the German student, coming diagonally across the street.

"Dietrich, you here!"

The young man raised his hat with a ready blush.

"How do you come to wander so far?"

"I come to mass, monsieur."

"What, you are a religious animal?"

"Always, monsieur."

"Well, I should never have thought it."

Dietrich merely smiled, raised his hat a second time, and turned up the wide steps. Bardi went on alone.

The next day he took the *train-rapide* for Lausanne and was at his father's door on the third afternoon from that spent with Mlle. Davoust.

As soon as the door opened and the great artist looked into his sister's face, he knew all.

He who was strong and well and handsome and sought after far and wide for his genius, his charm, his ever-buoyant spirits—he who had tossed the world about in his hands as he had molded the plastic clay—he who knew no will—no power mightier than his own—he knew all.

He knew why his father had quitted the plain for the mountain—why his sisters had never married—why the others had died—he knew all.

"Manuell!" his sister exclaimed in joy, "father, father, it's Manuëlo come again!"

She did not embrace him—instead she drew back—and he walked into the small room and saw his father after the lapse of twenty-five years—after that change from plain up to mountain—truly the skull he had shaped for his pupils in his studio at Paris was hardly more death-like.

"You should not have come," said his father, drawing back as his sister had done, "we never meant you to see."

Bardi stood there dumb—the truth in its entirety was so huge of form that he could not speak at once. It blistered his eyes, and sang in his ears, and dried his throat to a cinder-heat. He tried to speak, but the only sound that came first was that act of clearing the way which was so habitual with him.

"Oh, most merciful Virgin," cried his sister, "he has it, too. It was thus that we also began."

Then the strong man that had thought himself the only law that him-

self could know very nearly swerved where he stood. He had to put out his hand in blindness and it was his sister's that caught it and held it tight pressed to her lips while hot tears fell fast upon his flesh.

"This is bitter," said his father's shaking voice from the corner—"you were the oldest, the strongest, the star among them all; we prayed—we hoped—that you would be spared the curse."

Bardi remembered his strength at that, threw up his leonine head, released his sister's hand with a strong pressure, and looked them both in the face.

"And you have lived here and thus alone through these long, long years?" he said, finding his speech again and finding it as firmly and fully as of old. "Why, what has upheld you through it all?"

"God—and the dream of yourself," said his father.

"We have prayed for you ever since we knew that nothing could be better for us," said his wan and withered sister.

The next day he left them; to remain was no kindness, they were so fearful of the contagion for him—and his cough seemed to grow worse as he looked into their faces.

He left them and started back by the longest route. He went first to Bourges and stood by the tomb of that Tuscan princess where love draped herself and her loved ones in a beauty of sculpture that preserves their names forever.

"This is art," he said, looking down at the marble crows that hide faces unseen except to those who lie prostrate before them and defile their humility by curiosity, "this is art—art decorating death. Death is the only reality."

Then he went out of the barren church and traveled on to Moulins, where the love of another mourning woman has persuaded art to deify her grief, too. In that church also he stood and looked.

"And that is love," he said, looking upon the heart-wringing face of the mourning duchess, "love decorating grief—which is the reality there, I wonder!"

And then he went on to Bourges where a master-strength among the medieval strivers has surely sate itself down for all time.

"This is the greatest of all," he said; "here is the one chord to which my ego can respond."

For two days he looked upon the giant buttress that buttresses the giant among French cathedrals (for in the grandeur of absolute might there is only Bourges) and walked beneath the wall that emperors piled for one who backed emperors to use for a foundation when he should choose to house himself. At the end of the two days he went on to Tours and from thence up to Paris, once more quite calm, quite secure in his confidence in himself.

The next morning was his day for that particular studio of which Arlette had charge. He was there at the usual hour and stood up before them as usual—not one of them saw any change in him—unless it was the blond student who had studied medicine.

"Ah, Dietrich," the master said to him, in a tone of almost affectionate greeting, "you have done well—very well"; then he turned the other's modeling a bit on its stand—"yes, very well, indeed."

This was certainly such praise as rarely flowed over the master's lips—the young man blushed with pleasure.

"Look you," said Bardi, "come tomorrow to my own workshop, second floor, rue de Blanc, 60—I want to speak to you in private."

They all looked at one another; no such honor as this had ever befallen one of them before. In syllables loaded with gratitude Dietrich accepted the invitation, and Bardi put his stammering aside with a smile and a wave of the hand.

"You will come; that is all," he said, and close upon the heels of the smile came that sinister sound which was now a distinct and unmistakable cough.

Later in the same day the artist was with his fiancée—he never had touched more than her hand with his lips, so he had not so much to relinquish—at

present. For the future—that was another thing.

When the Moorish body-servant who waited on the great sculptor showed Dietrich in among the magnificences of the great artist's studio next day the young student was well-nigh blinded by the glorious entourage of beauty and costliness which surrounded him.

"My dear fellow," said Bardi, coming in through two hangings of velvet and gold, "I am glad to see you—more glad than I can tell you. Sit down; how do you like it?"

"Superb," said the young man simply. But he was looking at the artist instead of his belongings, and applying the word to him alone.

And Bardi was superb! In his shirt of fine white linen, rolled open over his bronzed Italian throat, he looked a thousand times better worth admiration than all the treasures that he held there heaped about him.

He stretched his arms wide when the young man spoke thus and the gesture might have been meant to draw the attention to all about him, or to draw all the attention to himself.

"Yes," he said, standing thus, "it is superb—all is superb. Only unfortunately I cannot keep it so."

The German remembered words spoken in the studio.

"You mean to give this up upon your marriage?"

"Even sooner."

"Sooner?"

"Yes, even sooner."

There was a pause, the young man not knowing what to say.

"You are not rich, I suppose?" the artist said.

"On the contrary, quite poor."

"So much the better—you have no ties."

"Assuredly no ties, monsieur; I am alone in the world." He greatly wondered to what all this was leading.

"Look!"

With one quick motion the master threw back a huge hanging and revealed a wondrous figure of a draped woman essaying a girdle.

"You recognize?"

"Is it Juno?"

"With the girdle of Venus—right."

"It is a masterpiece, monsieur."

"Is it not?"

Then he went to a cabinet and took down a photograph that leaned against a vase there.

"Mlle. Davoust," he said simply, holding it up.

"Yes, monsieur, I know."

"You know!"

"I have often seen her in church."

"Ah!"

Dietrich's eyes sought the floor; his face had colored slightly; the master only smiled as he replaced the picture where he had taken it from.

"Now I will explain," he said, coming back and standing before the young man. "Look at me—I am all things to be envied—is it not so?"

"It is indeed so, monsieur."

"Well, you do not envy me, do you?"

The student started sharply.

"And why should I not, monsieur?"

"Because you have heard me cough—and have studied medicine?"

"It is true."

"You know that I am doomed—you have known it since you came to work under me—well, what do you think of me—I only learned it last week." He folded his arms with a quick gesture and faced the other with a look of proud appeal.

The young man came quickly forward—his face full of sympathy. But Bardi drew back, smiling.

"Not that," he said, "not that. That isn't what I desire. You see I have a few theories and I try to keep true to them—if I had married and she had died I might perhaps have been glad of a hand to clasp, for I should have been very lonely—but all that is not to be. I am the one to die and she is the one for you to console."

"I don't understand—"

"You will later—come here." He led him before the great Juno-marble.

"Look well upon it," he said; "mark every curve and turn—later when I am gone I want you to reproduce this."

"But, monsieur, you have already——"

"You don't understand—you will later. Look well upon her——"

The young student obeyed in bewilderment, striving to collect his senses to their best serving of his brain.

"Then here is the studio," said the master, leading him out into the middle of the floor; "this must also be yours."

"Mine, monsieur!"

"Yours!"

"But I cannot afford——"

"Later, my good fellow, later—I am merely giving away that which is my own."

"But, monsieur, you may——"

"Oh, of course, for years and years. If your God wills. But I will for myself, you know."

The student closed his lips firmly.

"I want to prove my own belief," Bardi went on; "I have never wavered in it and I never shall. Now, as to your income—I was with my lawyers yesterday. All that has been looked to most legally——"

"Monsieur, monsieur, I cannot——"

"Hush—later, if you will——" he laid his hand upon the young man's arm and lifted a finger in warning—it is true—there were steps on the stair.

"Mlle. Davoust and her aunt coming to drink tea with us," said the artist, in explanation of the interruption.

Fifteen seconds later the Moorish servant ushered two ladies into the room. The countess cast one shocked glance at the artist's attire, but the other two never saw it. The shock of instantly repressed joy in Marie's violet eyes, the deep crimson on the young student's face—it was all quite plain.

"Madame, pray sit here," said their host, bringing forth a softly cushioned chair. "I have been arranging all the details of my little feast today. I like to have things to suit me, you know,

and I have just put the last touch but one to this affair. Providence itself could do no better."

The countess looked again at the linen shirt blousing over the flat roll of silk that encircled the trousers band.

"Providence takes a strange shape, monsieur," she said, half-haughty, half-laughing.

"Often," the artist laughed, "oh, very often."

Then he looked at the young girl and the young man, who sat opposite one another with downcast eyes. For a single second his own eyes shaded, then he turned blithely away.

"I will order the tea," he said.

"You are one of monsieur's favorites, I suppose, monsieur," said the countess to Dietrich.

"Yes, madame, I have the honor to be often commended by him."

Before he could say another word a terrific crash resounded from the further end of the room, from the spot where the Juno had stood behind the curtain.

"Oh, good God!" screamed the countess.

"It is Bardi himself!" exclaimed the young man. Like the illumination caused by a lightning flash he saw and understood everything now—the mastered was glorying in a final mastery over his very self. Running to the other end of the room he slipped between the folds and looked down into the face of the artist lying crushed beneath the marble goddess. He was not altogether dead.

"Oh, why did you do this!" the student cried in agony.

"It was not I," the dying man said painfully, a curious joy fleeing across his distorted features, "it was your God in me. I see how they mean it now. He willed, and I was only the power behind His will."



## SOME FAR-AWAY PLAYS

By Channing Pollock

ENGLAND is "the home of the drama," but last season the drama was not "at home."

None of my few remaining illusions was destroyed by that fact. Years ago I learned that edible sardines are not to be had in Sardinia, that Turkish tobacco is excellent everywhere except in Turkey and that nowhere else is Rhine wine as poor and as expensive as on the Rhine. London has not yet seen the best British-made play of the past twelvemonth, the piece in question having been produced originally at the Hudson Theatre, New York, under the title of "The Hypocrites."

The one English offering of the Summer that really impressed me deeply was a French comedy called "Mlle. Josette, Ma Femme." Frederick Harrison presented it at the Haymarket as "My Wife," and thus aliased it opened our own Empire this Autumn, with a cast including John Drew, Billie Burke and Ferdinand Gottschalk. You shall hear more about the play a little later on, when I have completed the work of getting myself disliked by adding that, sterile as was the theatrical season on John Bull's island, it was still worse on the Continent. Paris stages were crowded with frivolities and revivals of time-worn successes; Brussels afforded nothing but variety entertainment; Vienna was devoting itself entirely to grand opera; and Rome, basking and baking in the white heat of a July sun, had finished its amusement term altogether. During three months of constant theatre-going I witnessed seventy performances in seven countries, and today I couldn't recall half-a-

dozen of them without reference to my memoranda.

Our party discovered Paris a trifle late to see the best offerings of the year. "La Rivale," which had been attracting favorable attention at the Comédie Française, had given way to blank verse by Victor Hugo; and Pierre Wolff's sensational "comedy," "Le Ruisseau," had completed its run at the Vaudeville. The few natives who remained in town were swelling the ranks of vagrant Americans at those out-of-door performances which always reap rich harvests about the time that the chestnuts begin blossoming along the boulevards. Most of these performances are very light, and so exceedingly risqué that one cannot help thinking them especially arranged for a people who do not quite dare to patronize Anna Held at home.

There is something charmingly naïve and ingenuous about dramatized wickedness in Paris. The dividing line between naughtiness and nastiness is so finely drawn, and the ethical considerations entering into the matter are so entirely incomprehensible to us! Witness at the Parisiana the amusing complications of a *fantaisie* yolept "Les Colles de la Femme." M. Bombarel, a glove merchant, is happily married, but maintains that second ménage which, whatever the facts of its existence in real life, is quite indispensable to the husband on the French stage. The lady at the head of the second establishment accompanies M. Bombarel to a rather wild dance, where she is introduced as Madame Bombarel. What more natural than that, when the lady becomes separated from

the glove-maker and is taken ill, solicitous friends should send her to his home? There she is discovered in the next act, masquerading as a relative from the country and declining to return to her own roof until the unhappy Bombarel has vouchsafed her "*une petite heure d'amour*." To this request the hero of the story is adamant, and the audience assembled was noisy in its approval of his virtue. A sweetheart is all right in her place, according to Bombarel and Paris, but the location of that place must be carefully selected if the gentleman is to retain his self-respect and that of his neighbors.

Few of the hot-weather presentations attempt a narrative as coherent as that of "*Les Colles de la Femme*." The open-air resorts of the Champs-Élysées indulge each year in *revues*, which carry the same string of plot through a maze of vaudeville, with considerable side patter relating to topics of the day. These places are attractive not so much on account of their shows as because of the theatres themselves and their habitués. The Marigny, for example, is a jewel of a building, set in a ring of lovely gardens. After the short variety bill which kills time up to ten o'clock, and which introduces a large number of Americans, the whole audience promenades through the grounds to music furnished by an orchestra of Neapolitans. The scene in the open is indescribably brilliant. The walks are illuminated by thousands of electric lights and crowded with demi-mondaines in gorgeous gowns and picture-hats and crustings of diamonds. I used to wonder how these women afforded the garb they wear, until a Parisian friend accounted for the matter in an amusing way. "The modistes," he said, "furnish dresses gratis in order to advertise their establishments to visiting husbands."

Two characters who walk through all *revues* are the *compère* and the *com-mère*. The former is an exquisite young man who has just inherited a colossal fortune and whose ambition in life is to spend it in seeing life with the latter,

who, by the way, is always the prettiest girl within reach of the management. Thenceforward the couple wander through the shaky pretense of a musical comedy, in the course of which there are endless songs and dances and changes of costume. The music is from every possible source—most of it American melody disguised by a fitting of French lyrics. George Cohan played a prominent part in this year's *revues* at the Ambassadeurs and the Marigny, where "I'm a Yankee Doodle Dandy" and "Give My Regards to Broadway" were set down as the compositions of M. L. Halet—whoever he may be. The Flood Brothers, Edna Aug and Chris Richards together with Saharet, who used to be billed as a French danseuse in America, and is now billed as an American dancer in France, were among our compatriots at the Marigny.

The last time I was abroad all the *revues* were full of Madame Humbert, who had just been apprehended in what Sherlock Holmes would have called "the affair of the safe." This season the principal figure is the woman cab-driver, of whom there are a dozen to be seen in the streets and a hundred in the music-halls. The Lady Who Goes to the Theatre With Me explained this discrepancy satisfactorily by observing that, if the real Jehuesses looked anything like the make-believe, the male cabby would soon become as extinct as the dodo bird. A very clever ballet at one Summer theatre began by showing a rear view of six fiacres with *femmes cocher* on the boxes. They were recognizable only by their shiny hats, boasting little else of the *cocher* dress and not much of any other. The costuming in Parisian musical comedy—what there is of it—simply outclasses anything of the sort to be seen in America. It is not more gorgeous, but infinitely more ingenious, more harmonious and less ample.

The popularity of the little theatres of Paris grows greater every year, and last Spring the whole town was talking of two or three one-act plays presented in the *Bouis-Bouis*. Of course, knowing Paris, you know these tiny

places, which are to be found on the Boulevard des Capucines, the rue Caumartin, the rue La Fayette, and pretty nearly everywhere else. All that is necessary to being the manager of such a theatre is that one has leased an apartment on the ground floor of a flat-building in the business district. One knocks down a wall between two rooms, erects a platform and becomes an impresario. Not many of these miniature playhouses hold more than six hundred persons. An ordinary Harlem flat would make a Thespian temple in which the Théâtre des Capucines could be set like a dog-kennel in a stable-yard.

Nevertheless, some of the best ideas of French dramatists go into the short plays offered at the Capucines or the Rabelais. These pieces bear the same relation to dramas that short stories do to novels. They are about forty minutes in length, and four of them are performed each evening. The bill usually includes a farce, a risqué comedy, a serious sketch and one of those gruesome horrors peculiar to Paris. None of these short plays is to be confounded for a moment with the rubbish acted occasionally in our vaudeville houses. They are tabloid dramas of logical story, sustained interest and psychological development of character. Their stories, however, are rarely of a type that would meet with approval on our side of the water, the elements of fantasy, grotesquerie or terror being much too pronounced. I saw, at the Grand Guignol, a farce the hero of which was a celebrated surgeon who, having lost his favorite pair of forceps, concluded that he had sewed the instrument inside of a patient. The humor of the play arose from the manner in which he got one client after another upon the operating-table, ostensibly to cure their ills, but really to search for the missing forceps. Finally a maid appeared with the instrument. She had found it in the sugar-bowl.

The greatest success of its kind was achieved by a thriller, the scene of which was laid in a submarine torpedo-boat. This vessel was shown at the

bottom of the sea, and at the beginning of the piece it was discovered that something had gone wrong with the machinery and that the craft could not be floated. Every man in her was doomed. The idea of the dramatist was that this sudden facing of death brought out the worst features of cowardice and brutality in each of his characters. What followed was horrible, not only because of the gore and murder that it brought about, but in the development and presentation of all that is hideous and dreadful in human nature. Darkness finally concealed the struggling, dying wretches in the doomed boat. You saw them tearing and cutting at one another in their efforts to escape; then the lights went out, to shine again on a typical French conclusion to the play. This was a public memorial service held in honor of the heroes who had died so nobly for their country in the submarine vessel *So-and-So*. The Minister of Marine began a glowing eulogy of the courage shown by these men, and in the middle of his speech the curtain fell.

Our regular theatre-going in Paris was somewhat vagrant. In the first place, there was little of importance to see, and, in the second, I blush to relate that my French serves better for practical purposes than for artistic. I can ask for warm water in seven different dialects, trying them in succession until I get the right one and the warm water, but the limitations of my knowledge of verbs frequently lead to confusion at the play. It is difficult to get a clear idea of any plot, when you can't be certain whether the hero is telling the heroine that he loves her, or will love her, or has loved her. The *Lady Who Goes to the Theatre With Me* generally acts the part of a Greek Chorus, and we should have ventured even into the precincts of the *Comédie Française* if there had been anything especial to profit by when we got there. Late in June the *Divine One* was appearing in "*L'Aiglon*" at the Théâtre Bernhardt, "*Raffles*" was being done at the Théâtre Réjane, "*Une Billet de Logement*," an indescribable farce held



over from last season, was at the Palais-Royal, and "Madame Butterfly" was filling most of the time at the Opéra Comique. All of these, except the farce, I had seen at home, and had no desire to witness again. It is bad enough to hear arias about the rent and duets on the topic of Egyptian cigarettes sung in English, without sitting through them translated into French at the Comique. We enjoyed the performance of "Mlle. Josette, Ma Femme" at the Gymnase, but I prefer to describe that to you as I saw it, adapted by Michael Morton, at the Haymarket, in London.

Some of our most dependable reviewers have written from the other side that they found nothing clever in "Mlle. Josette," which, as I have said, Mr. Morton calls "My Wife." To me the piece struck the most human note that I heard during my stay in Europe. It is light, of course, but it has true sentiment and one moment in the last act that reaches the heart as nothing I know has done since Reformado Jack's scene with the gipsy in "The Road to Yesterday."

Gerald Eversleigh, a comfortable, well-to-do British bachelor, has as his oldest friends a French couple, the Duprés, whose daughter, Beatrice, has grown up under his watchful eye. In the first act, while Eversleigh is giving a supper-party to his chum, the Hon. Gibson Gore, and a variety actress named Miriam Hawthorne, the young girl comes to his apartment in great trouble. Her parents, with the Latin idea of these matters, have arranged a distasteful marriage for her, while she believes herself to be head-over-heels in love with another man. That other man, René Falandres, and she have hit upon a plan to thwart said parents, the plan being nothing less than that Beatrice shall marry Eversleigh, to whom the Duprés can have no objection, and remain married to him until she becomes of age, when a divorce can set her free to seek the arms of the patient René. Eversleigh, shocked and determined in the beginning, finally consents to this scheme, and receives

the blessings of everyone concerned, including the young Frenchman, who is to spend the following year in Africa. Beatrice promises to be a good girl and make as little trouble as possible for her temporary husband.

In the next act, two months later, the Eversleighs are honeymooning in Switzerland. Beatrice hasn't quite kept her pre-nuptial promise—who does?—and Gerald finds his position trying, to say the least. Mrs. Eversleigh has been flirting desperately with a certain M. Valboure, to the great scandal of the hotel loungers, who know her to be a bride. The groom warns her, but she continues heedlessly, until Valboure, finding a recent amatory epistle from René, concludes that the young wife already has a lover, and that she may be willing to have two. After the scene that follows, Beatrice, amazed and indignant, flies to her husband, who gives Valboure his candid opinion of such conduct and is challenged to a duel. This combat ended, Eversleigh returns to London, leaving Beatrice with her parents, who have arrived at the hotel. The third act shows the proxy husband back in his rooms, where his spouse follows disconsolately, and where the two find that they really have loved each other all the time. The necessary happy ending is brought about by the appearance of René with a better half whom he has annexed in Morocco.

This bright little story is told convincingly and well, with flashes of delicious dialogue and with droll and delicate handling of the humor arising from the situation in which a husband watches with paternal solicitude over the love-affair of his wife. Two episodes in the comedy are especially charming, that which I have already mentioned as reaching the heart being one of the best minutes I remember in any play. The Eversleighs have kissed many times, but precisely as they kissed before they were married. Now they have quarreled, and Beatrice has pursued her lord *pro tem.* to his chambers. They meet—she contrite, admiring, full of sympathy for the husband who has

been wounded slightly in the duel fought on her account; he just beginning to realize that jealousy may have played some part in his behavior at the hotel. The pair are reconciled, and the wife, still hardly more than a child, lifts her lips to her husband's. They kiss—but there is something so different in that kiss! All the thrill of first love, of new-born passion, of awakened manhood and womanhood blossoms red in their souls, and the couple with whom this beautiful daily miracle has been wrought stand staring at each other in delighted wonder, until the girl, suddenly and deliciously afraid, gives a tiny cry and runs out of the room. I think the oldest and staidest of us felt a cozy little happiness at that moment, and reached furtively over the chair-arms or back in our memories for hands warm with life or cold these many years. All the world loves a lover—thank God!—and any lover loves all the world.

I think I sha'n't tell you about that other episode now; it would seem puny after the story of the kiss. The incident is merely a conversation between the ingenuous Beatrice and the world-wise Miriam, and by the time this article gets into print you may hear it for yourself at the Empire.

C. Aubrey Smith was Eversleigh, the rôle selected for John Drew, and he played it so well that I hereby forgive him publicly for parting his name in the middle. His was a firm, manly and convincing performance, and the rôle alone is to be blamed for the fact that two other people, Marie Lohr and A. E. Matthews, ran away with first honors. Miss Lohr, who has the part of Beatrice, is a very young girl, born of a very old theatrical family, and anyone sweeter, fresher, brighter and more sympathetic it would be hard to imagine. I had just completed a dramatization of Agnes and Egerton Castle's novel, "The Secret Orchard," and for weeks after seeing "My Wife" I could think of no one for the character of Joy except Miss Lohr. A manager told me I might as well try to secure Eleanor Duse; that this child was the most

sought-after young actress in London. Mr. Matthews's delineation of the Hon. Gibson Gore, a helpless young man, was high art. The whole piece was capitably given and most agreeable. It was preceded at the Haymarket by Henry De Vries in his familiar sketch, "A Case of Arson." The cover of the programme which I brought home announces in symbolic, significant red letters: "My Wife—A Case of Arson."

In London we went to the theatre diligently, dutifully, dolefully. We picked out all the plays we ought to see, and saw them, and then we saw a lot of plays that no one ought to see whose patience in affliction isn't double that of Job. In point of fact, we went to everything except a piece called "Votes for Women" and the musical comedies. "Votes for Women" escaped us because we were misled by its title, and we escaped the musical comedies because nobody can make me sit through modern musical comedy unless I am under contract. James O'Donnell Bennett, the erudite critic of the *Chicago Record-Herald*, afterward told us that "Votes for Women," which was at the Court Theatre, was the cleverest offering of the year, but he told us too late. Few of the plays in London were very bad, and fewer still were very good, the great majority ranking with that migratory soul mentioned by Kipling, which was neither white enough for paradise nor black enough for the other resort. They were puffing little literary soufflé—most of these things—stuffed with seminary sentiment that skidded past the mental palate and left no taste behind. "There isn't a play in town," boasted the *Daily Mail*, "but has the virtue of being clean." Cleanliness is a virtue also attributed to soap, but no one exercises his intellect in nightly contemplation of that useful household commodity.

If it were put to a vote, England would rise *en masse* to disagree with me, but I think I may say without prejudice that the very best performances in London were American. "My Wife," which I have called pre-eminent among British comedies of the

season, must take second place with "The Truth," which was dreadfully slated when Clyde Fitch offered it at the Criterion, New York, but which has come to its own handsomely in Europe. Marie Tempest is appearing in the piece at the Comedy, and two months ago was attracting larger audiences than went to any other dramatic entertainment in the West End. Four other big American hits across the pond were "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch," at Terry's; "Brewster's Millions," at the Hicks; "The Earl of Pawtucket," in which Cyril Maude is acting at the Playhouse, and Grace George, who recently concluded an excellent engagement in "Divorçons" at the Duke of York's. Fanny Ward made a splendid personal impression when she presented "In the Bishop's Carriage," first at the Waldorf and later at the Aldwych. Miss Ward has developed into an exceptionally capable actress, and her Nance Olden was a profound surprise to the most conservative playgoers of the Fourth Estate. Julia Marlowe's season with E. H. Sothorn at the Waldorf already has been written of at length in this country. Both Miss Marlowe and Mr. Sothorn were heartily approved by London, which, however, took less interest in the classic and poetic repertoire presented than do our own much-maligned theatre-goers. Two Indian plays, "Strongheart" and "The Red-skin," failed utterly. Robert Edeson starred in the former at the Aldwych, and an English company produced the latter at the Drury Lane.

When you have subtracted nine American importations, eight revivals, six musical comedies and one or two pieces familiar to New York from the season's list of productions at regular West End theatres you haven't much left of use in a magazine article. "John Glayde's Honor," done by George Alexander at the St. James, was much discussed for a time, and may be interesting here by reason of the facts that it was written by Alfred Sutro, author of "The Walls of Jericho," and is to be given on Broadway

by James K. Hackett. The conclusion of "John Glayde's Honor," for which Mr. Sutro was much condemned, seemed to me to be the biggest, strongest and most original feature of the drama. In this ending Mr. Glayde, discovering that his wife preferred another man to himself, stepped aside and let her have him. Britain didn't think so, but I am sure you will agree with me that the good sense shown by Mr. Sutro in this termination was second only to the good sense shown by Mr. Glayde.

An especial value of the "unhappy ending" was that, without it, any absent-minded person casually strolling into the St. James might have mistaken "John Glayde's Honor" for Wilton Lackaye's stellar vehicle, "The Pit." Mr. Sutro's story is so like that of the late great Frank Norris that the two may be told in the same words. In {"John Glayde's Honor"} an American business man, named {John Glayde,} has married a luxury-loving society woman, who cares for him in the beginning, but is estranged by his close devotion to work. {Trevor Lerode,} a painter, dances attendance upon {Mrs. Glayde,} and, during a crisis in the affairs of the husband, practically persuades her to go away with him. Here, as has been stated already, the two plots diverge. John Glayde loses his wife, while Curtis Jadwin loses his money. Sealed expressions of opinion as to which is the "happier" conclusion will be received at this office.

With the theme itself, all similarity of the two works ends. "John Glayde's Honor" is merely an entertaining, somewhat surfacy play, where "The Pit" was a big, deep, true novel, brutally real, pulsating with life, virile and vigorous from cover to cover. Mr. Sutro makes little attempt at character-drawing—at showing *why* John Glayde neglected his wife for his business; at showing *why* Mrs. Glayde gave up her husband for her lover. He merely tells us that they did, and lets it go at

that. The piece is notable for its paucity of incident and for the scantiness of its appeal. There is never one moment when the audience really cares whether Mrs. Glayde runs away and repents or stays at home to do it.

The rôle of Glayde, forcefully and well acted by Mr. Alexander, will be an admirable fit for Mr. Hackett. Eva Moore played the wife at the St. James, making much of a rather ungrateful part. Lerode was impersonated by Matheson Lang, and an individual named Michael Sherbrooke was unconsciously funny as Glayde's New York secretary, Shurmur. Mr. Sherbrooke persistently spoke what sounded like English with an Esperanto accent, under the evident impression that it was American.

"The Scarlet Pimpernel," with Julia Nielson and Fred Terry, had been running nearly seven hundred nights when I got to London. If Miss Nielson and Mr. Terry had presented the play on Broadway they would have been running yet.

This arrantly florid and foolish romantic drama, written by Baroness Orczy and Montague Barstow and produced at the New Theatre, is an example of the swashbuckling tide that reached its highest flood in "The Prisoner of Zenda" and its temporary lowest ebb in each successive imitation that came after. These plays reflected life as it was never lived anywhere outside of *The Family Story Paper*, and the best fortune that ever came to our stage was their ultimate disappearance. Emaciated old maids and prematurely bald young gentlemen still write them in this country, but they never get nearer the footlights than the desk drawer in a manager's office. "The Scarlet Pimpernel," like the rest, deals with a preposterously heroic hero, a ridiculously virtuous heroine, a very bold, bad villain, and the whole paraphernalia of swords, duels, cutthroats, hair-breadth escapes and silly gush. Whoever really enjoys such a hash must lack common sense or possess an enviable fund of humor.

"The Scarlet Pimpernel" is the name

of a little wayside flower which Sir Percy Blakeney assumes when he enters into the business of helping French aristocrats marked for the guillotine to get across the Channel into England. Sir Percy suggests a little wayside flower about as much as the late lamented Jumbo suggested a sonnet by Rossetti—but let that pass. The identity of the adventurer is unknown to his friends and to his own wife, a Parisienne from whom he has become estranged because of the suspicion that she may be a spy. Chauvelin, an emissary of the Republic, tempts Lady Blakeney to discover The Scarlet Pimpernel, offering as a reward the life of her brother, who has written a letter that would ensure his condemnation by the tribunal of The Terror. Lady Blakeney, therefore, unwittingly sets about the betrayal of her husband, even while that gentleman plots bringing her brother to safety and England. Sir Percy ventures into France with this purpose, and his wife gives Chauvelin information which sends that sleuth-hound after him. Finding out eventually what she has done, Lady Blakeney follows Sir Percy to Calais, where, miraculously rescued through all sorts of improbable interventions, they pause in the danger zone long enough to sing a duet, and the play ends.

Not much can be said of the quality of the acting in the production, but there can be no complaint as to its quantity. Such a lot of posing and mouthing and ranting and scene-chewing has not been witnessed since the merciful demise of the old "tie-wig" school of histrionism. Miss Nielson, neither a very young nor a very small woman, attempts that sort of kittenishness which always borders on the comic, while Mr. Terry's affectations become simply unbearable. These stars are said to plan bringing "The Scarlet Pimpernel" to America during the Winter. It is to be hoped that before attempting to carry out the plan they will read and heed *Punch's* terse and trenchant advice "to a young gentleman about to be married."

Maude Fealy's vehicle for this season has been selected from the New Royalty Theatre, where it had a prosperous engagement under the title of "The Stronger Sex." The play is gossamer-like, but not without brightness, and while I should be loth to prognosticate a big success for it here, our audiences are sure to find pleasing entertainment in this comedy by John Valentine. The story concerns a fortune-hunter, the Hon. Warren Barrington, who marries an American girl, named Mary, in order to obtain her money. Just before the wedding the prospective bride overhears a conversation in which the bridegroom-to-be confides in a former sweetheart the purpose of his alliance. Mary does not cry out, "Leave me!" She knows a better way of punishing the Hon. Warren. She marries him.

From that time on Mary's tactics are those of Petruchio with Katherine. She compels her husband to live within his allowance, refuses to give him large sums for "business ventures," and when, goaded to madness by this brutality, he makes a move to strike her she "pulls a gun." The treatment is successful. Barrington falls in love with his wife, reforms, goes to work, and at the close of the play gives promise of becoming a useful citizen.

Nina Boucicault's performance of Mary, otherwise charming, was spoiled by her idea that to suggest being an American she must talk through her nose. I haven't written notes to actress ladies outside my list of acquaintances since I was sixteen years old, but I was tempted to scrawl a line to Miss Boucicault, saying: "You really shouldn't take your idea of American women from traveling delegates to Bible Society Conventions. The great majority do not employ their olfactory organs in conversation." Herbert Waring was the Hon. Warren, and the company included Paul Arthur.

On occasion I have been able to fancy "Hamlet" with Hamlet left out," and even to think such a subtraction desirable, but I cannot imagine "Toddles" without Cyril Maude. In this I may be

doing an injustice to Joseph Coyne, who is to have the rôle here, but the farce, presented more than five hundred times at the Playhouse, is so frail and so entirely dependent upon the individuality of its comedian that I had much rather say Mr. Maude was a success than "Toddles." Clyde Fitch's adaptation from the French of Bernard and Godfernaux owed its vogue wholly to one funny act and one funny actor. This act transpires in the sleeping-room of Toddles, who is in his pajamas through the whole scene and in bed during most of it.

"Toddles" belongs to the days when we laughed at farcical occurrences regardless of their possibility in real life, but we do that no longer, and the chief weakness of the play lies in the fact that its story and its characters are utterly beyond belief. The hero is a witty but worthless nobleman, amusingly indifferent to the important things of existence, who is annoyed into a money marriage by one relative, while a combination of others try to keep him out of it. Chief among the demurrers is a lady who wants Lord Meadows (Toddles) to wait for her ten-year-old daughter to become of marriageable age. Throughout the one funny act mentioned Lord Meadows sleepily keeps his bed, regardless of the circumstance that his wedding is to take place at noon. The mother of the ten-year-old steals his clothes, and Toddles goes to church in his pajamas. Not a very admirable or convincing story, is it?

Charles Hawtrey was seen at the Vaudeville in Louis N. Parker's play, "Mr. George," the American rights to which are owned by James K. Hackett, and which was remarkable in London chiefly for the persistence with which the Stars and Stripes were waved throughout its action. The scene of the piece is laid in Boston, at the time of the "tea-party," and "Mr. George," the English head of the firm of Perceval & March, coming out to inspect the house, proves to be the pretty daughter of the dead senior partner instead of that partner himself. The junior part-

ner, John March, promptly falls in love with her and wins her despite the machinations of a very villainy gentleman named Charles Vulliamy. It is a slender tale, and not calculated to create much excitement in New York. Mr. Hawtrey, one of the quaintest and cleverest of comedians, portrayed John March in his familiarly natural manner, and Billie Burke, who is now with John Drew, was charming as "Mr. George." Later in the season Mr. Hawtrey revived "Mrs. Ponderbury's Past" at the Vaudeville.

When this article appears Francis Wilson will have been some time at the Garrick Theatre, New York, in "When Knights Were Bold," the farce by Charles Marlowe in which James Welsh, the original Mr. Hopkinson, achieved lasting success at Wyndham's. The most striking feature of this play is its likeness to "The Road to Yesterday," produced in America about the same time that the Marlowe work was first shown in England. Though the latter is hilariously funny, in the matter of merit it does not compare with the daintily delicious comedy that serves Minnie Dupree. "When Knights Were Bold" aims to be nothing more than broad farce, and its author has attempted none of the poetry, fantasy, sentiment and ingenuity so charmingly employed by Beulah Dix and Evelyn Greenleaf Sutherland. The person whom Mr. Marlowe takes back a few centuries is a very modern young man, Sir Guy de Vere, whose adventures when, still clad in fin-de-siècle evening clothes and clamoring for cigarettes, he is inserted into the so-called "age of chivalry" are acrobatic and enjoyable.

It is impossible to pass over the dramatic season in London without some mention of its curtain-raisers, those short preliminary plays that entertain the gallery while the stalls are lingering over port and walnuts. Decidedly the most appealing play in Europe last Summer was Louis N. Parker's "Jemmy," which prefaced "Mr. George," and decidedly the most dramatic was Austin Strong's "The Drums of Oude," which has survived "Toddles" and two

or three other more pretentious offerings selected to follow it. Neither piece acts more than half an hour. "Jemmy" shows a young woman visiting her village parents, who suppose her to be working at a shop in London. Her prodigal generosity to them awakens the suspicion of the canny old mother, whose questions bring to light the fact that the girl's money has not been derived from honest labor. The dramatic suspense created by the cross-examination, and the pathos inherent in the ultimate shame of the girl and the grief of the old people, make "Jemmy" a truly remarkable play. "The Drums of Oude" deals thrillingly with the mutiny in India, and has a moment of excellent excitement when a fuse ignited by the commander of a British fortress burns slowly toward the powder magazine on which that officer is standing with the woman he has just wooed and won. E. M. Bryant's "The Peacemaker," which preceded "The Stronger Sex," and W. W. Jacobs's "The Boatswain's Mate," presented before "When Knights Were Bold," also deserve commendation.

Many of the best-known London players offered nothing new last season, Charles Wyndham depending upon a revival of "The Liars," while Lewis Waller brought "Monsieur Beaucaire" and one or two other antiques down from the shelf, and Arthur Bouchier, with Violet Vanbrough at the Garrick, followed a production of "The Duel" with a return to "The Walls of Jericho." There were four big musical comedy hits in London—"The Merry Widow," which I heard in Vienna under the title of "Die Lustige Witwe," at Daly's; "Miss Hook of Holland," at the Prince of Wales; "The Girls of Gottenberg," at the Gaiety, and "Tom Jones," at the Apollo. The music of "The Merry Widow" is charming. I went to none of the others, having long ago reached the opinion that the humor of the slapstick is the same in all languages, and that, while musical comedies may differ from one another to some extent, the differences are not

such as to call for profound thought or extended comment. To comic opera I am indebted for one laugh in London, but that laugh was at the reminder that human nature is the same everywhere and that there is no surer method of making people want a thing than by forbidding it.

The Lady Who Goes to the Theatre With Me and I were walking one day in the Strand when our attention was attracted to a great crowd, vigorously pushing to get into a small shop. In the window of the shop—one of those

"arcades" devoted to penny-in-the-slot phonographs and moving pictures—hung a sign, the largest letters on which read: "HEAR THE BANNED OPERA!"

"'Salome'!" said I to The Lady.

"Of course," she replied.

But we were wrong. Closer proximity to the sign revealed the fact that "the banned opera" in which this sudden interest was being felt was nothing worse than the poor old "Mikado," interdicted at the Savoy during the presence in town of some Japanese dignity. Such is life!



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## HIS LACK

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"But——?"

"Oh, he hasn't the million, by considerable, but he has the air."



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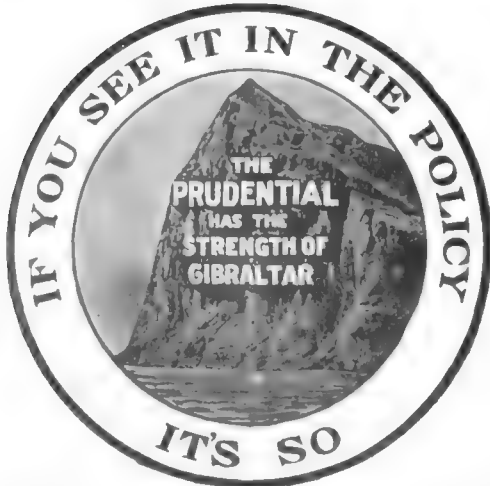
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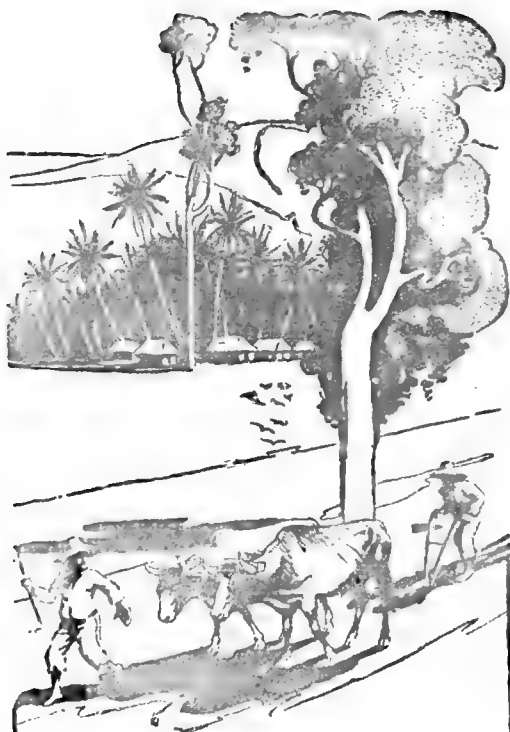
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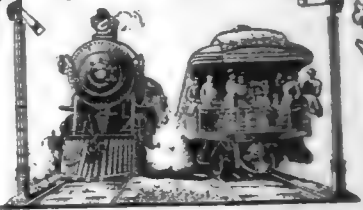
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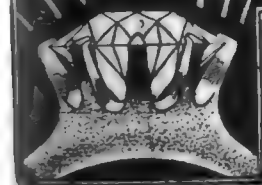
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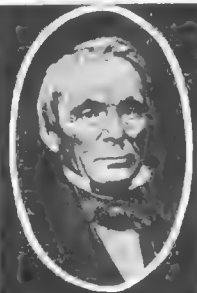
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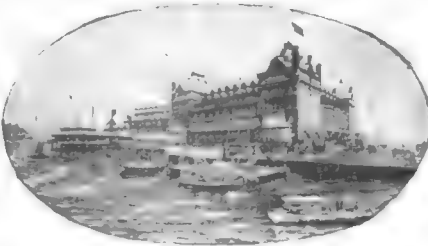
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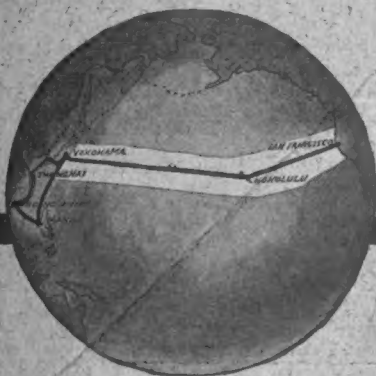
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